

**Agricultural  
Research  
Service**

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

**February 2009**

# **CARE**

## **AREA OFFICE QUESTIONS**

**CONSOLIDATED ASSISTANCE,  
REVIEW, AND EVALUATION**

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## CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – AREA OFFICE

### ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – GENERAL

#### 1.0 Administrative and Financial Management

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

#### 1.01 Area Administrative and Financial Management

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

#### 1.02 Headquarters Administrative and Financial Management

- Describe the interaction between the Area Office and Headquarters.

#### 1.03 Other

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

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

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

We recommend that the reviewer be able to take a copy of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to assist in performing a review of the 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 and at orders over \$3,000. Select a sampling of closed-out orders/contracts for review as listed in Section 2.03-3 of these functional questions.
- Verify warrant limitations (delegation of authority) for acquisition personnel at the Area. (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>
- 213.3M - REE Purchase Card Program - <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/purchase-cards/index.htm>
- DR 5013-6 - [http://www.da.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/purchase\\_card\\_more.htm](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 (NFC Manual Title II, Chapter 5)?
- Verify that a tracking system is in place to handle the administration of PR's, contracts, purchase orders, and assignments of requests for action. An example would be to have a manual or automated log. Verify that an action is traceable through the system, i.e., from PR to award document. Is there a management information system in place to report on status of sensitive actions?

## 2.02 Procurement

- Verify that current Policies and Procedures (P&P's), Bulletins, etc., are readily available.
- Does the Area Office have a Location P&P review schedule? Are these reviews conducted as required (each Location every 5 years)?
- Confirm that the "Product Service Codes", "Principle 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. Is the Area Office making progress in this migration?
- Ensure that existing BPA's have been converted to IAS effective 12/1/06 and contain all the necessary terms and conditions, including individuals authorized to place orders and extent of their authority, and securing maximum discounts. (FAR Subpart 13.303).
- Ensure BPA orders are only used by those individuals authorized on the agreement (FAR Subpart 13.303).
- Ensure that whenever possible, contractors invoice monthly rather than invoicing for each call order (FAR Subpart 13.303). This is to reduce paperwork and cost to the Government.
- Ensure BPA's are reviewed annually to reaffirm the need and proper usage (FAR Subpart 13.303).
- Ensure that call orders over \$3,000 are documented to show that competition was obtained or notation for sole-source (FAR Subpart 13.303).

- Ensure that individual call orders do not exceed the maximum call order limit (FAR Subpart 13.303).
- Ensure that BPA's do not exceed the total dollar limitation or its stated time period (FAR Subpart 13.303).
- 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 per 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.
- Look for open market purchase orders that exceed \$100,000.
- Check logbooks for multiple orders to the same vendor/merchant broken down to remain under warrant authority.
- Check purchase orders for best value (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. Does the Area Office maintain a ratification log? Can the office explain or demonstrate the contents and procedures for a ratification package? (P&P 212.16)
- Ensure that unpriced orders are documented to show the need for using this type of order (FAR Subpart 13.302-2).
- Ensure that the total value of the order is within the delegated authority of the contracting officer.
- Check to see that biobased products are purchased if comparable in price, quality and availability to non-biobased products. Refer to USDA's Web site for a list of biobased products ([www.usda.gov/biopreferred](http://www.usda.gov/biopreferred)) (FAR Subpart 23.4, APD Alert

2008-07).

- Check to see that recycled products are purchased if the Agency designated item exceeds \$10,000 or the aggregate amount paid for designated items in the preceding fiscal year was \$10,000 or more and can be acquired competitively within a reasonable time, meeting appropriate performance standards and at a reasonable price (FAR Subpart 23.4). Refer to EPA's Web site for a list of designated items (<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/](http://www.energystar.gov/) and [www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement) (APD Alert 2008-07)
- Check to see if the contracting specialists/purchasing agents are using required sources properly, particularly, AbilityOne Program (formerly Javits-Wagner-O-Day (JWOD) Act Program) sources (FAR Part 8.7).
- Check to see if the Area has an established AbilityOne goal. Is there an awareness of the AbilityOne Program? What actions have the Area taken to meet REE AbilityOne goal and to increase REE's participation through contracting opportunities and program support (DR 5080-001).
- Check to see if procurement outreach efforts are being accomplished. Is there an awareness of the procurement preference program in terms of the need to locate small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, HUBZones, and service disabled veterans? (FAR Parts 13 and 19, DR 5090-002, DR 5090-003).
- Are there established procedures for accepting capability statements and/or market literature from small businesses? Are these small businesses being added to source lists? For open-market projects between \$25,000 and \$100,000 are there at least one each of the following small business concerns identified on the source list: small business, woman-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, and service-disabled veteran?
- Ensure that regulations on Set-Asides for Small Business are adhered to: Open-market purchases over \$3,000-\$100,000 must be set aside for small businesses. The file should be documented as stated in FAR Subpart 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 synopsis requirements.

- Verify that all proposed contract actions between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are displayed in a public place or placed on FEDBizOpps. Verify that all open-market requirements of \$25,000 or greater were posted on FEDBizOpps (<https://www.fbo.gov>; FAR Parts 5 and 13).
- Ensure that competition is obtained for requirements over \$3,000? If not, the file should document why competition was not feasible or not obtained? For non-competitive purchases exceeding \$3,000, ensure that the basis for price reasonableness determination is included in the file (FAR Part 13.106-3).
- Services over \$2,500: If subject to the Service Contract Act (SCA), wage rates should be obtained through Wage Determinations On-Line ([www.wdol.gov](http://www.wdol.gov)) and incorporated in the order. (FAR Subpart 22.1008-1, APD Alert 2004-04). An updated SCA Wage Determination should be incorporated with each exercised option.
- 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 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 Act Wage Determination rates are incorporated in the order (FAR Subpart 22.404). An updated DBA Wage Determination should be incorporated with each exercised option.
- Request for quotes: The file should document the method of solicitation (orally or written) and include information on offers, prices, discounts, and basis for determination of price reasonableness. A written solicitation is required for construction requirements over \$2,000. (FAR Part 13).
- Ensure that source lists are maintained and used to select sources for simplified acquisitions. This includes GSA (FAR Parts 8 and 13).
- Defaults – In the case of Termination for Default, did the office charge the excess costs of any re-procurement 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)
- Ensure that as stated in FAR Subpart 4.805, the Area retains records as follows:
  - Construction contracts over \$2,000 and all other contracts over \$100,000 for 6 years and 3 months after final payment;
  - Signed construction contracts of \$2,000 or less and all other contracts of \$100,000 or less, 3 years after final payment;
  - Contracts (and related records or documents, including successful proposals) at or below the simplified acquisition threshold (\$100,000) for other than construction, 3 years after final payment.
- Confirm that purchasing agents are aware of the CCR requirements prior to order issuance of purchase orders. Vendors must be registered in CCR to be eligible for contract award (FAR Subpart 4.11).

#### 2.02-3 Purchase Cards

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

- Check purchase card log to determine if cardholders are using AbilityOne (formerly JWOD) distributors and suppliers to obtain office supplies. <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/ability-one.htm>.
- Check purchase card log for multiple orders to same vendor/merchant broken down to remain under cardholder's single purchase limit.
- Check purchase card log for transactions over \$3,000 to ensure competition is obtained and that the file contains a contracting document in the form of either a purchase order or contract, including applicable clauses. Ensure a printout of the FPDS-NG action is in the file and that it reflects the procurement award document.
- Confirm that contracting officers are aware of the CCR requirements prior to

- paying with a card/check over \$3,000 (FAR Subpart 4.11).
- Check purchase card log for checks over \$2,500 to ensure that approval from the REE Agency Program Coordinator (APC) is in the file. (AGAR Advisory No. 52 and APD Alert 2004-09)
- Check purchase card log for payments for recurring telecommunication services or telecommunication purchases over \$350. These purchases are prohibited. Refer to APD Alert 2005-4 and AGAR Advisory 58A.
- 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 identifies 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 AAPC

- Verify that the AAPC is in the 1102 series. For those not in the 1102 series, check to see what procurement training they have received to qualify them as a Level 1B Contracting Officer. 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 AAPC is using to manage and provide oversight of the purchase card program (i.e., Access Online®, etc).
- Reports
  - Check to see if AAPC has submitted the required management and oversight reports on Purchase Card/Check Use and Reconciliation to the REE APC.
- Management and Oversight

- Check to see if the AAPC is performing any physical reviews of Local Agency Program Coordinator (LAPC) files. (The LAPC file review is to be commensurate with the number of LAPC's in the Area.) AAPC's are to keep a separate file of the LAPC reviews with supporting documentation selected for review.
- Check to see if cardholder's supervisors are reviewing cardholder transaction reports on a quarterly basis in accordance with the guidance in DR 5013-6.
- Check to see if the AAPC is performing any random reviews of cardholder purchases.
- Ensure AAPC is maintaining a file of LAPCs for the Area. Each file should contain a record of the training for the LAPC. (Departmental Regulation 5013-6)

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 8.404)

- Ensure that delivery orders used to purchase from the FSS:
  - Is processed within IAS. If the purchase card is used, an OF-347 is used to document the transaction and is included in the purchase card file.
  - Have the special item number shown for each item.
- Ensure there is a printout of the FPDS-NG action in the file for delivery orders and delivery order modifications. Verify the FPDS-NG action reflects the delivery order document and contract award (FAR Subpart 4.6, <https://www.fpds.gov/>).
- Ensure that quotes have been obtained from at least three schedule contracts before placing an order with the FSS contractor. (FAR Subpart 8.405-1)

2.03            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 4.804-3)

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

#### 2.04 Personal Property

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

Note: In February 2009, USDA is planning to replace its current personal property system PMIS/PROP with a new system, CPAIS-PP. 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

- Determine who has delegated authority as the Area property management officer (APMO) and list additional staff positions that assist in personal property duties and responsibilities.
- Determine how the APMO ensures new Location property management officers are aware of their duties and responsibilities. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 2, Property Management Authority, Subsection “Property Management Officers.”)

- List the names of any Location where the Area property staff provides direct operational support.
- Determine the number of designated Accountable Property Officers (APO's) the Area Office has. If the Area provides direct operational support to a Location, list the number of APOs at the Location.

2.04-2        Training

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

2.04-3        Reference Material

- Determine whether the Area property staff has access to and uses the following personal property references:
  - REE Manual 221.1M, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle, & Aircraft Management, dated 8/3/99 (policy)
  - NFC Procedures Manual, Personal Property System (PROP), dated March 1998 (using PMIS/PROP)
  - CPAIS-PP Documentation (New – 2009)
  - Property Management Quick Guide, dated 2004 (overview of PMO duties)
  - Quick Guide to Using AAMS/GSAXcess, dated Oct 2007 (reporting and acquiring excess property)
  - Agricultural Property Management Regulations-AGPMR (USDA regulations)
  - Federal Management Regulations-FMR (GSA's Federal Policy)

2.04-4        File Management

- Ensure the 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 property 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 contain the APO signature. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 4, Physical Inventories, and Agriculture Property Management Regulations, AGPMR 104-51.106)
- Determine how often the property office reviews the PROP28 Report, which lists the physical inventory status of all Area APOs. (Note: The PROP28 Report in PMIS/PROP will list the APO name, address, and latest inventory date to help determine current/delinquent inventories.)
- Explain how the property office notifies APOs when physical inventories are due. Verify that the property office provides APO’s with written instructions and determine how much advanced notice they routinely provide.
- Verify whether APO’s submit documentation supporting inventory changes such as transfers, excess, disposals, and new acquisitions before the property office completes 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, memoranda, 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”).
- Determine how the APMO monitors the inventory status at each Location. Determine whether the APMO requires the Location PMO to report or submit inventory reconciliation documentation.
- 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 must request copies purchase documents after the transaction appears on the Suspense Report/Staging Area Report.
- Explain how the property office requests equipment descriptive information (description, serial number, make, model, etc.) from the APO, assigns the AG number, and updates new accountable property to the official property system. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 3, Accountability and Control, Subsection “Receipt Documents for Accountable Property.”)
- Explain how the property office authorizes employees to remove property from the facility, including the type of documentation used, 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 to them.
- Determine how the APMO distributes asset ID numbers (AG numbers for PMIS/PROP and PP numbers for CPAIS) to Location PMOs.

#### 2.04-7 Property Suspense/Staging Area Reports

- Determine how often the Area property office generates the Suspense Report and distributes it to the Locations. Explain how the APMO monitors suspense status to ensure Locations reconcile items within 60 days of appearing on suspense. (See 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 problem.

#### 2.04-8 Sensitive Property

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

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

2.04-9      Reporting Property Theft, Loss, or Damage

- Determine if the property office has experienced any property theft, loss, or damage. Ensure the files contain appropriate documentation such as form AD-112, including statements from the custodian, supervisor, or APO. For thefts, ensure documentation includes information from appropriate law enforcement officials.
- Verify whether the lost/stolen documentation contains signatures from the APO and that the property office removes accountable property from the official property management inventory 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 or exchanges (such as direct trade-in with vendor or sale by GSA).
- Ensure the office is aware that USDA prohibits selling Government 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 the item description, serial number, AG number-if accountable, and the trade-in amount on the purchase document. Ensure the property office accurately removes the item from the official property management system when the trade-in involves accountable property.
- Ensure the property office 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 Area 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 Area on behalf of ARS/USDA. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 18, Acceptance of Gifts, Subsection “ARS Field”.)
- Review the files to ensure all gift acceptances contain a letter from the offeror stating the gift is “unconditional” and the value of the gift. Determine how the office ensures the unconditional gift is not from a prohibited source. Ensure the office documents acceptance of the unconditional gift on behalf of ARS/USDA and updates PMIS/PROP if the gift meets the accountability criteria. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 18, Acceptance of Gifts, Subsection “Unconditional Gifts”.)

2.04-12      Excess Property

- Explain how the office determines whether excess property is available before acquiring new acquisitions (first source of supply, as applicable). Determine the methods the Area uses to view available excess property.
- Determine the method APOs 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 ensure the documentation includes 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 the APO's maintain accountability and control of excess property during the screening process and pending disposal. Determine how the office identifies and labels excess property pending disposal and whether the office has an excess storage facility. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 10, Reporting Excess Property, Subsection "Procedures".)
- Explain the circumstances when the property officer bypasses required Federal screening and authorizes abandonment or destruction using form AD-112.
- Review the property files to determine whether form AD-112 contains detailed information supporting condition codes of "unserviceable", "salvage", or "scrap" when reporting property as unserviceable. Ensure the documentation also contains signatures from the APO and PMO. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 16, Abandonment and Destruction).
- Explain any problems that occur when reporting excess/unserviceable and how the APMO resolves the problem.

#### 2.04-13      Disposal

- Review the files to ensure that when the office disposes of property by abandonment/destruction, the APMO authorizes the action via signature, and the APO and a witness signs the AD-112 certifying the disposal.
- Review the files to ensure that when the office donates property in lieu of abandonment/destruction after USDA and Federal screening, the APMO authorizes the action via signature, and the office donates 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 officer posts a "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 property files to verify that the disposal process shows a clear audit trail from reporting an asset as excess to its final disposal. A clear audit trail includes a signed excess report, proof of screening, signed transfer document or

AD-112 signed by the APO and a 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 property 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 APMO. (See APD Alerts 2007-13, Stevenson-Wydler, dated May 2007, and 2007-14, Computers for Learning, dated July 2007.)
- Ensure the APMO requests and submits an Area-wide consolidated report to APD for the annual Non-Federal Recipients Report for property transferred under the donation programs.

#### 2.04-15 Motor Vehicles

##### 2.04-15.1 Size and Composition

- Confirm that the APMO is aware of the limits on passenger vehicles (sedans/station wagons).
- Explain any fleet size increases and review the files to determine whether the files contain justifications to explain increases.
- Determine how the office ensures the Area only acquires vehicles that meet the Federal fuel average fleet economy standard, meet replacement standards, and are the minimum size necessary to accomplish the mission. (See REE Manual

221.1M, Section 19, Motor Vehicle Management, Subsection “Replacement Standards” and FMR 102-34.)

- Explain how the APMO ensures there is a continued need for a vehicle before it is replaced. Verify that all requests for new vehicles include the AG number or tag number of the vehicle the Location is replacing. Determine how the APMO ensures Locations report replaced vehicles as excess or sale upon receipt of the new vehicle.
- Verify whether the immediate 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).
- List the types of hybrid vehicles the immediate Area Office has purchased. (EO13423)
- Explain how the APMO determines whether an AFV is available when submitting requests for replacement vehicles.

#### 2.04-15.2 Vehicle File Management

- Determine whether the Area maintains all official motor vehicle files for the Area or determine whether the Location maintains the official file. Review the vehicle files to ensure the files contains the vehicle requisition, maintenance and service records, and accident files.

#### 2.04-15.3 Identification

- Ensure the office vehicles are properly identified with Government tags, decal AD-792, For Official Use Only, AD-185, Penalty for Unofficial Use. (The new version of Government tags are embossed with “For Official Use Only”. When using these tags, the AD-792 decal is not required.) Ensure the vehicles contain 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 for 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”. EO 13423 also requires strict reporting of all fuel use.)
- Explain how the property office requests and updates Government provided fuel/maintenance costs and POOL Fleet Card fuel and maintenance costs to the official personal property system for Area specific vehicles and Location vehicles. (See APD Policy Memorandum 221.1-05, Motor Vehicle Reporting Requirements, dated 10/11/00, and REE Manual 221.1M, Section 23, Vehicle Operations, Subsection “Reporting Operational and Maintenance Data”. EO13423 requires strict reporting of all fuel use.)
- Determine how the APMO uses PCMS-Fleet and US Bank’s Access On-line System to monitor fleet costs.
- 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 property 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 APMO 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 office received required USDA approval for any other occurrence. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicles, subsection “Home to Work Transportation”.)
- Explain the approval process for allowing employees, who are in “official travel status”, entitled to per diem, and are using the Government vehicle rather than a rental vehicle, to temporarily store a Government vehicle overnight. Ensure overnight storage is to prevent employee hardship and increases Government efficiency and is not for employee convenience or comfort. (Temporary overnight storage may be approved when an employee must arrive/depart at an unusually early or late timeframe, determined on a case-by-case basis. (See REE Manual 221.1M, Section 22, Use of Government Vehicle, subsection “Temporary Home to Work Transportation While in Travel Status.”)

#### 2.04-16 Oversight

- Describe the method and processes the Area Property Office uses to provide oversight to Location PMO’s regarding the following aspects of property management, including the time frames.
  - inventory management (inventory status, proper documentation)
  - suspense/staging area reconciliation (timeliness, proper reconciliation)
  - reporting excess, (timeliness, proper documentation)
  - fleet management (vehicle replacement, AFV, fuel/maintenance costs)
- Explain any problems that occur when conducting oversight and how the APMO resolves the problems.

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

3.0 Facilities Asset Management

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

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*.

3.0-1 Long Range Facility Planning

- Is there a multi-year facilities plan developed for all Locations within the Area? Is the Area Office using the ARS Capital Project and Repair Plan (CPRP) process to guide the planning and budgeting of current and anticipated facilities needs? Determine how the Area Office identifies its current and long-range facilities needs? Does the Area Office periodically review its facilities to assess condition and needs? Who provides direct input to the multi-year plan? 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 Area Office aware that all facilities needs or projects must be reviewed and validated by the Agency and Area Asset Management Review Board (AMRB)? Determine if the Area Office maintains an up-to-date 3-year CPRP consisting of a prioritized list of all Agency and Area AMRB-validated and approved facility projects. Ensure that the Area's Facility Plan developed for the ARMP correlates with the annually updated ARS CPRP. (Latest Bulletin on ARS CPRP).
- Ensure that the Area Office is aware that only projects meeting the following criteria are to be listed on the Area CPRP: a) any land acquisition regardless of dollar value; and b) All facility projects costing at least \$25,000. Type of facility projects include, but not limited to, new construction, modernization, repair and maintenance, renovation, alteration, environmental clean-up, and asset demolition or disposal action. (Latest Bulletin on ARS CPRP).

3.0-2 Pre-approval of Building Authority Projects

- Is the Area Office 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? Is the Area familiar with the descriptions and limitations of the Agency's construction authorities? 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 Area Office 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 Area Office develops its annual budget for facilities operation and maintenance (O&M) needs? How are O&M costs identified with individual buildings or structures at each Location within the Area? Is the Area Office aware of the Location's methodology for distributing O&M costs to the appropriate building or structure at each Location?
- Verify if a special accounting code has been established in FFIS to facilitate the capturing and reporting of O&M costs for all Area Locations. Determine if an Area O&M cost data is being captured throughout the year for reporting purposes. Determine if the Annual O&M cost information is recorded in the Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS). (Latest Bulletin on Capturing of Operations and Maintenance Costs).
- Determine if the Area Office has a formal O&M Program for accomplishing preventive and routine maintenance of its buildings and facilities? Does the Area Office have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the Area? Determine how historical data of completed maintenance work is recorded and maintained? Are record/as built drawings properly stored and protected? Are O&M manuals properly maintained and accessible to maintenance staff?
- Determine how the Area Office insures that Locations annually earmarks at least 4 percent of its base funds to accomplish routine repair and maintenance (R&M) needs or has received a waiver in accordance with Agency policy. (ARMS Manual, ARS Manual 245.1, Chapter IX).

### 3.0-4 Implementation of Project Design and Construction

- Determine Area compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements related to construction. Are required environmental

assessments and all NEPA related documentation, including categorical exclusions, findings of no significant impacts, and records of decision on file?

- Assure that all realty interests associated with a project have been completed, including confirmation of Federal-ownership of the property or a lease agreement sufficient to cover the Federal Government's investment in the property. Ensure that easements, right-of-ways, or other land use agreements for roads and utilities in support of the projects have been executed.
- Assure Area project compliance with approved master plans, National Historic Preservation Act, and Threatened and Endangered Species Act.
- Determine if Area Engineering staff is involved and participates in the process of commissioning of building systems, final inspections, acceptance, and closeout of construction projects.

#### 3.0-5 Post Construction, Warranty and Maintenance Work

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

#### 3.01 Energy Management

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

- Determine if the Area Office is integrating energy and water conservation and sustainability into its regular operations and maintenance activities per EO 13423, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT 2005) and the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA).
- When was the last energy audit and recommissioning performed at covered facilities? Have recommended energy conservation projects been implemented or included in the Capitalization and Repair Project Plan (CRPP)? Does the CRPP include future energy audits? Were energy projects recommended by the audits implemented? For covered facilities, energy audits and recommissioning should be done every 4 years and energy projects that were recommended by the audits implemented within 2 years.
- Determine if the Area Office maintains and monitors energy consumption records of its Locations.
- Determine if the Area uses employee incentive programs to reward exceptional performance for implementing EO 13423.

- Determine if the Area provides training and education in energy management requirements, promotion of Energy Star and other energy efficient and low standby power products, WaterSmart, EPEAT and purchasing recycled and biobased products for Federal purchase card holders. (EO 13423, EPACT 2005 and EISA)
- Ensure that the Area has a recycling program including paper, cardboard, cans, bottles and toner/ink cartridges. (EO 13423)
- Is the Area aware of, and does it have a policy of enabling Energy Star features on all computers, equipment and systems? Is the Location aware of what energy saving features have been incorporated into buildings within their construction authority? Are they functioning? (EO 13423, EPACT 2005 and EISA)

### 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 Area 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 Area 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>
- Determine if the Area Office is ensuring that facilities at each Location meet the needs of individuals with physical disabilities. Have professional surveys been done at each Location to assess physical accessibility needs to conform to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and ABA?
- Determine if physical accessibility projects identified by the assessments been implemented or included in the Facility Plan at each Location.

### 3.03 Architect-Engineering (A-E) Contracts

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

#### 3.03-1 A-E Contracts

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

- Determine if the Area has any concerns with A-E services provided under Headquarters contracts.
- Determine how the Area obtains A-E Services: through their own A-E contracts utilizing the procedures in FAR Part 36.6 or through Headquarters contracts.
- Verify that IAS is being used.
- If the Area acquires A-E services by issuing delivery/task orders against their own or Headquarters A-E contract, verify/determine the following:
  - That 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. (FAR 16.505)
  - 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, FAR 4.805(b)(2).
- If the Area has A-E authority and acquires their own A-E services, verify/determine the following:

- That 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 FAR 36.602-1)
- That an evaluation board was established, that it evaluated all SF-330's, and whether the board's chairperson submitted a report to the Contracting Officer (CO) that contained the names of the three highest qualified (ranked) firms, at a minimum, in accordance with FAR 36.602. Determine if, once the report is received, negotiations are conducted with the highest ranked firm in accordance with FAR 36.606.
- That award is made to the highest qualified (ranked)/most preferred firm. (FAR 36.606)
- Whether modifications are executed properly. Are these actions documented in the file and the following information included: reason for the change; the contractual authority and FAR clause cites for the change (exercise of option, changes, differing site conditions, suspension of work, etc.); how these actions are priced (pre-priced or based on actual costs); how the price is determined to be fair and reasonable. Do the modification documents include the appropriate FAR clause cite for the change(s)? (FAR 13.106-3, FAR 13.302-3, FAR 36.609, and FAR 43.204)
- If contract deliverables and performance periods are appropriately monitored. (FAR 4.803)
- That significant discussions and/or issues are documented and copies are maintained in the contract/purchase order file. (FAR 4.803)
- That delivery/task orders/contracts are closed out properly (FAR 4.804) and are maintained in accordance with FAR 4.805(b)(3) 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

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

- Determine the Area's level of construction authority.
- Verify that IAS is being used.
- Determine if large projects are being split to keep them within the Area's authority.
- Determine if commercial item procedures (FAR Part 12), rather than construction procedures (FAR Part 36), are being used for small dollar, uncomplicated tasks, such as installation of a hot water heater, replacement of one or two windows, small painting projects, routine carpet purchase and installation, replacement of small areas of drywall, simple electrical or plumbing tasks [replacement/installation of a light fixture or a water faucet], and similar small and noncomplex services. Refer to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Memo, Applicability of FAR Part 12 to Construction Acquisitions, dated July 3, 2003.
- Verify that requisition(s), justifications, and all other required backup documentation (Government estimate, specifications, sketches, drawings, etc.) is maintained in the file.
- Verify that construction requirements with an estimated cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 are posted in a public place or on the Area's Web site (FAR 5.101(a)(2)). Verify that requirements with an estimated cost greater than \$25,000 have been publicized in FedBizOpps in accordance with FAR 5.101(a)(1).
- Verify that a full copy of the Request for Quote (RFQ)/Invitation for Bid (IFB)/Request for Proposal (RFP) (for all construction projects that exceed \$2,000), with the appropriate clauses and wage determination, is maintained in the file. (FAR 4.803, FAR 13.101, FAR 13.302-1, 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 is determined to be fair and reasonable and the basis for such 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 4.603(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 a surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570) or alternative type of payment protection has been submitted and is in the file. (FAR 28.102-1(b) and FAR 28.102-1(c))
- Verify, for projects over \$100,000, that a valid Bid Bond from an individual surety or corporate surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570, Companies Holding Certificates of Authority as Acceptable Sureties on Federal Bonds and Acceptable Reinsuring Companies was submitted by the successful offeror and is maintained in the file. (FAR 28.101 and FAR Subpart 28.2)
- Verify, for projects over \$100,000, that the Performance and Payment Bonds submitted by the successful offeror are from a surety that is listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570. (FAR 28.202)
- Verify that the documents submitted by the successful offeror's individual surety as a pledge of assets for bid, performance and/or payment bonds were reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and determined adequate and acceptable. (FAR 28.203(f)).
- Verify, for projects over \$100,000, that valid performance and payment bonds (from acceptable corporate listed on the Department of Treasury Circular 570 or individual sureties), and certificates of insurance are submitted by the successful offeror prior to the issuance of a Notice to Proceed and are maintained in the file. (FAR 28.102 and FAR Subpart 28.2)
- Verify that Davis-Bacon Act (DBA) requirements (for projects exceeding \$2,000) are being monitored in accordance with FAR Subpart 22.4. For example, wage determinations and DOL Form WH-1321 must be posted by the contractor (FAR 22.404-10) and weekly payroll records must be submitted and reviewed by the Contracting Officer (FAR 22.406-6 and FAR 22.406-7), etc.
- Verify that significant discussions and/or issues are documented and copies maintained in the contract/purchase order file. (FAR 4.803)

- Determine if the Contracting Officer has delegated any authority or responsibility to personnel at the job site. If so, was a formal letter(s) of delegation or appointment as Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) issued that clearly describes the authorities, responsibilities, and limitations in accordance with FAR 42.202?
- Determine if change orders or contract modifications were properly issued. Were these actions documented for the file as follows:
  - What was the contractual authority for the change (changes, differing site conditions, suspension of work, etc.)?
  - Were these actions pre-priced or based on actual costs?
  - Was the price determined fair and reasonable? (FAR 13.106-3) (FAR 31.201-3)
- Determine if contract performance periods are appropriately monitored. If completion date passes, what action is taken?
- Are inspections conducted in accordance with FAR 46.1, 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 contracts/purchase orders closed out properly and maintained in accordance with FAR 4.804 and FAR 4.805(b)(4)?
- Are invoices processed in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act (FAR 32.904(d))?
- Are contracts/purchase orders closed out properly and maintained in accordance with FAR 4.804 and FAR 4.805(b)(4)?

### 3.05-1 Facility Security

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

Reference: P&P 240.3, June 2000, Physical Protection, Security and Conduct While on REE Facilities; and ARS Manual 230

- Has the Area Office verified that each Location (including the Area Office) has an Occupant Emergency Program (OEP)? Program guidance in the form of an OEP should cover procedures to be followed during emergencies, such as fire, explosions, bomb threats and natural disasters. (Federal Management Regulations, 41 CFR, Subchapter C, Part 102-74.230, and Departmental Regulation 1650-002)
- Verify that the Area Office prepares incident reports or obtains copies of such from local authorities and forward such to HQ.
- Verify that there is some type of fire protection/prevention system (alarms, sprinklers) in place.
- Verify that the Area Office is aware of the policy regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages on ARS property. Verify that the Area Director approves requests for exceptions for the serving of alcohol at special events at the Locations and Area Office.
- Verify that the Area Office coordinates with the Information Staff regarding the use of photographs of ARS facilities.

### 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.

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

- Has the Area Office prepared an updated Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?
- Does the Area Office maintain emergency contact information for employees that are essential to critical Area and/or Location operational functions? Are the emergency contact information/numbers maintained by separate people on PDA's or flash drives to avoid single points of failure? (ARS Initiative with Pandemic and/or other disaster response)
- Has the Area Office verified that each Location has established and implemented appropriate physical protection and security measures? (ARS P&P 240.3, ARS Initiatives)
- Has the Area Office conducted physical security surveys? Are surveys conducted in conjunction with ARS Homeland Security Staff (ARSHSS)?
- Is the Area Office aware of the ARSHSS Web site

[\[http://arsnet.usda.gov/HSS/\]](http://arsnet.usda.gov/HSS/)?

- Determine if the Area Office has any Physical Security Countermeasure projects planned or under consideration. If yes, are they aware of ARSHSS design and review role?
- Does the Area Office know to contact ARSHSS (301-504-4831) should any of the following situations occur: all possible OIG investigations; vandalism to, or theft of, mission critical assets; workplace violence activities; and workplace death events?
- Does the Area Office maintain a current roster and call list of local and Federal law enforcement contacts incorporated in either their COOP or Pandemic Plans?
- Does the Area Office have any security related MOU's in place? If yes, with what agency and for what specific service?
- Does the Area Office site utilize any outbound third-party security alarm monitoring and response mediums or services? If yes, who and what type?

Examples:

- Door contact alarms monitored and responded to by campus police between hours of 1800 – 0700 7 days a week.
- Intrusion detection systems monitored by a third-party service that notify a pre-determined entity (campus police, local police, contract guard services, Location employee, etc.).
- How often does the Area Office site review its security operation and administrative procedures?
- Is the Area Office issuing ID Badges in accordance with P&P 243.4?
- Does the Area Office provide security awareness training (annual or other time frame)?
- Are first responders (police, fire, EMS) familiar with the Area Office and are they aware of hazards (bio or other) that may affect appropriate response?

### 3.06 Acquisition (Purchase, Donation, Exchange or Transfer) 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 Real Property Manual, Acquisition Chapter 1, and 7 United States Code 2250(a).

- Verify that asset files are established and maintained at the Area Office or 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 Area Office acquired land in the last 5 years? If yes, does the Area Office have a copy of the applicable appropriation or law authorizing the land acquisition within the asset file?
- 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 FD.
- Verify that the Area Office is forwarding its requests for the establishment of Unique Asset Identifiers for all capitalized assets to Headquarters for processing. Do financial and contracting files reference the UAI in addition to the project name and Asset ID(s)? Do Procurement Requests or Purchase Orders come through the Real Estate Warrant Officer (REWO) for review to ensure a UAI is or is not required, to review the Budget Object Class Code and/or to ensure a "R" accounting code is used for capitalized assets or improvements?
- Verify that documentation being tracked to capture Design, Design Review, Construction, Construction Management, Inspection, Materials and Force Account Labor costs for constructed facilities or capitalized improvements.
- Upon completion of an asset or improvement, are all final payments filed in the asset file and cross-referenced with the Subledgers in CPAIS? Are necessary adjustments to the Subledgers processed by the Area Budget and Fiscal Officer or the ABFO's Representative prior to the Area REWO forwarding support documentation to Headquarters?

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

Reference: Real Property Manual Accountability and Control Chapter 9. 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 Area Office is aware of the dollar threshold(s) for accountability (all property) and capitalization (25K). At the Area Office, 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 to its Locations for verification and update every 5 years.
- Verify that changes to the physical inventory, conducted in 2007, have been updated in CPAIS.
- Determine if CPAIS is being used at the Area Office 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 Area Office has procedures in place to ensure the capturing of University space covered under a Memorandum of Understanding, Special/Cooperative Agreements, etc. and the utilization of this space with CPAIS?
- Verify that records are established and maintained with the following:
  - Custodial responsibility for the real property assigned to the Area Office.
  - Physical inventories signed by the Accountable Property Officer along with documented recommendations for adjustments and processed adjustments.
  - Identification of Historical properties/sites and related Historic Preservation Plans. Are copies provided to Headquarters?
  - Acquisition files containing copies of short- and long-term leases, ASTM checklists, certificate of inspection and use.
  - Construction-related materials including “as built” and floor plans,
  - Donation or transfer documents, and AD-107’s for formal documentation for CPAIS updates, etc.
  - Disposition documents, AD-107’s, AD-112’s, SF-118’s, SF-118a,b,c’s, if applicable.
- Verify if the Area Office determines that a Design/Construction project is an undertaking as defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

- Verify that the Area Office contacts the SHPO with its findings as to the undertakings potential effects on historic properties, if present.
- Determine if the Area Office has established an Animal Damage Control and/or Hunting Program. If so, verify that the Area Office maintains records or files pertaining to the established program.

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

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

- At the Area Office, who is responsible for monitoring utilization of land and facilities and ensuring utilization, is in accordance with Agency policies?
- Is the Area Office providing copies of inventory printouts to its Locations, for verification and update, every 5 years? What procedures are in place for conducting physical inspections of real property holdings to verify that all land, buildings and structures are accounted and properly reflected on the inventory record/within CPAIS and effectively used in support of mission-related activities?
- What process is used to review owned and leased, and otherwise managed properties and to communicate any modifications necessary to the REWO for maintaining an up-to-date inventory in CPAIS?
- How is CPAIS being used at the Area Office to capture space utilization, within all space usage types requiring performance measure data (laboratory, office, housing and warehouse), including the number of workstations, number of personnel, number of scientists along with the design capacity of laboratory space? Are there procedures in place to ensure the capturing of University space covered under a Memorandum of Understanding, Special/Cooperative Agreements, etc. and the utilization of this space with CPAIS?
- Are records established and maintained with the following:
  - Custodial responsibility for the real property assigned to the Area Office,
  - Physical inventories signed by the Accountable Property Officer along with documented recommendations for adjustments and processed adjustments,

- Identification of Historical properties/sites and related Historic Preservation Plans. Are copies provided to Headquarters?
  - Acquisition files containing copies of short- and long-term leases, ASTM checklists, certificate of inspection and use,
  - Construction-related materials including “as built” and floor plans,
  - Donation or transfer documents, and AD-107’s for formal documentation for CPAIS updates, etc.,
  - Disposition documents, AD-107’s, AD-112’s, SF-118’s, SF-118a,b,c’s, if applicable.
- Are there internal procedures in place to address encroachments on ARS lands? If an encroachment is identified or brought to the Area Office’s attention, how is this information relayed to the attention of the Area Office or REWO?
  - Does the Area Office take an active role in the review process during Design/Construction? Is this review process coordinated with Headquarters? What is the process used at the Area Office for coordinating with any local “Referral Agencies” that must be involved, such as planning commissions, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), etc? Are copies of all formal correspondence to and concurrences from consulting parties maintained within the project file and subsequently the asset file? Are copies of such correspondence provided to the REWO?
  - Who is the responsible agency official to determine if a Design/Construction project is an undertaking as defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act?
  - Has the Area Office established a working relationship with the SHPO? Does the Area Office have a Programmatic Agreement in place?

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

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

- Verify that the Area Office keeps copies of space or land leases, Memorandums of Understanding, Unfunded Cooperative Agreements, Supplemental Agreements, Land Use Agreements, etc. on file. Agreements may cover space in non-ARS-owned buildings, land for field plots, and the construction or placement of ARS-owned buildings.

- Determine if procedures are in place for the periodic review of the above documents.
- Verify that the Area Office 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 or need of the improvement as described in 7 U.S.C.2250(a).
- Determine if the Area Office has made any capital improvements (\$25,000 or more) to space not covered by a realty interest.
- Determine how the Area Office 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.
- What are the Area Office's procedures for tracking lease expiration dates and processing renewals? Is the Area Office aware that CPAIS can perform tracking?
- Verify that new leases contain energy efficiency and sustainability provisions. (EO 13423)
- Verify that leases are executed by an appointed Real Estate Warrant Officer.

### 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 Area Office 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 the Area Office or Area REWO is aware that requests for easements related to telecommunications projects use a special application process. If such projects cross multiple Federal lands under the custody of different agencies, a lead agency contact shall be designated? (SF-299, Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands – link is on FD Web site.)

- 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 installation of antennas are evaluated and coordinated to ensure that requests do not impact or interfere with existing research programs, future land development plan, “Referral Agencies”, human exposure limits, etc..
- Verify that the Area Office 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, June 1994

- If the Area has quarters, is it aware of the responsibilities regarding quarters management? How are rental fees collected and used in accordance with regulations?
- If quarters files are maintained at the Area , verify that files contain the following documentation:
  - Documentation of annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments, any waiver or deferral documentation.
  - Copies of the most recent appraisal and/or regional quarters rental surveys along with any background documentation.
  - Documentation of Condition of Employment (must be reviewed every 5 years) or Convenience of the Government appointment.
  - 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 signed by residents for homes constructed prior to 1970.

- Verify that rents are set by using the Quarters Management Information System.
- Determine if the Locations brings any rental collection problems incurred to the attention of the REWO.
- Verify that CPI adjustments 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 Quarters Rental Surveys and Sample Plans that are prepared by the Department of Interior are reviewed to ensure that the information provided is correct, such as the nearest established community.
- Determine how the Area Office 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 is prepared and signed by the inspecting official and employee who is renting the quarters. Verify that pictures of the inspection are included in the files.
- Verify that periodic physical inspections are performed to identify maintenance, repair and safety and health conditions that need correction. How are items that need correction formally identified and documented? What tracking mechanism is in place to ensure these are corrected?

### 3.06-5 Disposal of Real Property

References: Real Property Manual 245.1, Chapter 8, Disposal

- Briefly explain the Area Office's approach for identifying and disposing of unneeded real property assets. Are the Area Office personnel aware of procedures for disposing of real property assets?
- Does the Area Office maintain disposal data and track actual disposal actions, preparing associated paperwork and submitting to HQ within a timely manner? Does the Area Office perform CPAIS updates or coordinate with the HQ to ensure updates, including disposition data, are entered within CPAIS.
- Verify that the Area Office 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, which will include ARS-owned buildings, lands and structures.

- Verify that these documents are forward to HQ, FD upon completion. Are copies of completed/processed actions returned to the Area for inclusion in the asset files?
- 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 being addressed at the Area Office 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.
- Is the Area Office developing the annual protection and maintenance costs for real property assets for such expenses to be incurred during the excess/surplus/disposal process?

3.07 Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program

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

Reference: Manual 230.0, December 2005, Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program available at the following Web site:  
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/230-0m.pdf>.

- Verify that the Area Office has assigned personnel to plan, organize, and administer a comprehensive safety, occupational health, and environmental management (SHEM) program for ARS employees in the Area. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Verify that the Area Office is providing Area SHEM personnel with the necessary education/training, equipment, financial resources, and management support to develop and manage a comprehensive and viable SHEM program.

(ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Verify that Area SHEM personnel are assisting managers/supervisors by serving as the Area's technical advisor in the interpretation of pertinent legislation, regulations, standards, and policies related to safety, occupational health, industrial hygiene, and environmental management programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Verify that the Area SHEM personnel provide safety, health, and environmental guidance and assistance to Location personnel in the administration of their SHEM program. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Ensure that the Area Office is providing all supervisory personnel and employees immediate access to current applicable Federal, State, and local SHEM laws, regulations, codes, standards, policies, etc., available in paper, electronic, or other media formats. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Verify that the Area Office has established annual Area goals and objectives for eliminating and/or minimizing losses as a result of accidents/incidents causing injury, illness, or property/environmental damage in the workplace. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 10)
- Does the Area Office annually verify that adequate funds are allocated for Location SHEM program requirements in the ARMPS?
- Verify that the Area Office, through the budget process, is requesting funding and resources to ensure continued compliance with new regulatory requirements to correct compliance issues, and for pollution prevention. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 41)
- Verify that the Area Office monitors Hazardous Waste Cleanup (HWC) funds spending to ensure compliance with USDA HWC guidelines, ensure quality and accuracy of HWC Status of Funds reports for all Area wide projects, and ensure HWC activities are conducted and the findings reported to Headquarters as required. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

3.07-1 Safety, Health and Environmental Education/Training

- Verify that the Area Office has assessed the workplace and identified appropriate job-specific safety, health, and environmental training for all employees. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 14 and 26)
- Verify that the Area Office assists Location managers/supervisors in arranging for appropriate safety, health, and environmental education/training programs. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)

- Does the Area Office maintain a library of SHEM training materials (videos, DVDs, etc.)? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11).
- Verify through documentation that Area SHEM personnel have received all appropriate safety, health, industrial hygiene, and environmental training required under their position descriptions. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 14)
- Determine if the Area Office has a SHEM Incentive Awards Program at the Area and Location levels. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 15)

#### 3.07-2 Safety, Health, and Environmental Compliance Oversight

- Verify that the Area Office conducts or oversees the completion of annual inspections of all workplaces. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)
- Verify that the Area Office has a comprehensive SHEM abatement program to correct safety, health, and environmental deficiencies. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 22)
- Verify that the Area Office has an Accident/Illness Reporting, Investigation, and Analysis Program in place. Have accident reporting and OSHA recordkeeping instructions been provided to Locations? Does the Area Office review Location accident injury and illness data, i.e., OSHA Forms 300 and 301? (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11).

#### 3.07-3 Industrial Hygiene

- Verify that the Area Office provides support (funding, contracts, etc.) to industrial hygiene (IH) programs at Locations. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 31)
- Verify Location IH program reviews are being coordinated by the Area Safety Office. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 31)

#### 3.07-4 Environmental Management

- Verify the Area Office coordinates resolution of environmental issues with appropriate Federal, State, and local environmental regulators associated with facility design and construction projects. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Verify the Area Office assists property personnel in addressing environmental concerns related to the acquisition and disposal of real and personal property by ensuring they have an Environmental Site Assessment for each property transaction. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11)
- Verify the Area Office has completed National Environmental Policy Act

(NEPA) documentation for each research project and facility design by ensuring the Area Director has signed off on a Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement. (ARS Manual 230, Chapters 11 and 39)

- Verify that a comprehensive Area-wide Environmental Management System (EMS) program has been established. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 11; ARS EMS Implementation Guide)
- Verify that the Area Office has an EMS in place by ensuring they have a completed EMS Declaration of Conformance checklist. (ARS Manual 230.0, Chapters 38 and 63).
- Verify the Area Office has an EMS Policy Statement in place and that it is posted in a conspicuous location for employees to view. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 38)
- Verify that the Area Office conducts 2<sup>nd</sup> party environmental audits of their Locations at least once every 3 years. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 38)
- Verify the Area Office has an Area-wide inventory of underground storage tanks. (ARS Manual 230, Chapter 52)

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – **AREA OFFICE**  
HUMAN RESOURCES

4.0            Employment

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

- Verify the Area's procedures for receipt of applications. All applications should be either date-stamped or the date of receipt of the application should be notated in ink.
- Applications for permanent employment (competitive service): These applications must either be forwarded immediately to the servicing Branch, HRD, for response or the Area must return the application by letter informing the applicant to apply for permanent positions in response to specific vacancy announcements. These vacancies are advertised on the OPM Web site (USAJobs) and HRD Web site. Verify that the Area does not retain any applications for permanent employment.
- Applications for L/A and Student Positions (excepted service positions): If the 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 Area gives "veterans preference," if applicable, to applicants.
- Verify that the Area Office obtains proof of enrollment in school on a full-time or part-time basis from employees on student appointments. This may be done by requesting a copy of transcripts once or twice per year, or by requesting verification of enrollment through the registrar's office. Note: If a student stops going to school at least on a half-time basis as defined by the institution or skips more than one semester, the Area Office should initiate an SF-52 to terminate the appointment. [Reference P&P 413.8, Student & Volunteer Programs.]
- If volunteers are used at the Area Office, verify they have 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.]

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

#### 4.01 Time and Attendance

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 there are 3, but not more than 7 performance elements, of which 1 must be critical, but not all,
- Verify performance plans include an alignment statement or otherwise indicate the Agency/organizational goals to which the employee contributes (i.e. ARS Strategic Plan goals, National Program or CRIS project goals, business plan goals or other organizational work plan goals),
- Verify performance plans include specific expectations or specific goals that contribute to the Agency/organizational goals listed,
- Verify a separate critical element addressing EEO/CR is included in each supervisor’s performance plan. (Positions classified as supervisor usually include the term Supervisory, Supervisor, Manager, Officer, Director, or Administrator in the title.),
- Verify EEO/CR objectives are incorporated in a critical element (typically communications or customer service) in each non-supervisor’s performance plan,
- Verify performance plans of supervisors include a critical element addressing

supervisory responsibilities and expectations. (May be a separate critical element or incorporated in a related critical element.),

- Verify performance plans include a health and safety element where job related or required by the Area,
- Verify performance plans are reviewed and approved by a person at a higher organizational level than that of the Rating Official,
- Verify mid-year reviews are conducted and documented in a timely manner,
- Verify performance plans have been in place at least 90 days before an employee has been given a rating of record,
- Verify annual appraisals are reviewed and approved by a person at a higher organizational level than that of the Rating Official, and
- Verify ratings of record are being conducted and submitted within 60 days of the end of the rating cycle or within timeframes prescribed by the union/labor management agreement.

#### 4.04 Awards

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 employees for the following:

- Verify the incentive awards program (including Performance, Spot, Extra Effort, Time-Off, and Non-Monetary awards, and Quality Step Increases {QSIs}) is being used by the Area Office,
- Verify incentive awards are being initiated after an accomplishment or achievement has occurred,
- Verify true accomplishments and achievements are being recognized,
- Verify employee, managers, supervisors and team/groups are recognized for demonstrating superior equal employment opportunity accomplishments,
- Verify the ARS Delegation of Authority for approval of awards or any other Area approval policy is being followed,
- Verify written justifications are attached to AD-287-2 forms for all monetary

awards, for Time-Off awards, and for QSIs. (Performance accomplishment reports may be submitted in lieu of the written justification for Performance awards, QSIs, and Time-Off awards given for performance recognition.)

- Verify AD-287-2 forms are signed with two levels of approval. (Must have signatures of the Recommending Individual and the Approving Official.),
- Verify awards are approved at a management level higher than that of the Recommending Individual,
- Verify performance awards are being submitted within 60 days of the end of the rating cycle, and
- Verify through discussions with employees: Is there a pattern in the approval of awards (same employees/higher graded always receiving awards)? Are top performing employees being recognized for their performance and for their accomplishments and achievements? Are there unusual differences in the amounts of awards among awardees?

#### 4.05 Training

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. Reference P&P 412.2, Appointment and Orientation of New Employees and the New Employee Orientation Program Guide. Ensure that each orientation package includes:
  - A copy of "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch" and "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct"
  - The USDA Handbook on "Workplace Violence Prevention and Response"
  - A copy of the publication, "Handling Diversity in the Workplace"
  - A copy of the publication, "Sexual Harassment"
- Review how new research supervisors are oriented to the Research Position Evaluation System (RPES). Verify they been instructed to bookmark the RPES Home Page (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/rpes/>), particularly the "Tips for First-Timers" page.

#### 4.06 Position Description/Management

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

#### 4.07 Employee Relations

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. Are supervisors aware that the authority to propose and to decide conduct and performance actions has been delegated to the Area?

#### 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 Area Office follows the USDA Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct regarding the prior approval requirement for outside employment or activities for those employees required to file either a public or confidential financial disclosure report (SF-278 or OGE Form 450). Employees seeking to engage in employment/activities for which advance approval is required shall submit form SEB-101 to their immediate supervisor and Ethics Advisor for approval.
- Verify Ethics Advisor contacts (names and phone numbers) are either posted or readily available to all employees, and are updated at least annually.

4.08            Other

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

- Determine if there are any problems with retirement/separation procedures. [Reference P&P 426.1, Employee Exit Clearance Procedures, October 22, 1998.] Specifically,
  - Verify AD-581's for lump sum payments are forwarded for processing within 2 weeks of the employee's last day of work;
  - Verify all separating employees are given an SF-8 and a copy of the separating employee's SF-52 is faxed to the Frick Company.
  
- Determine if the Occupational Medical Surveillance Program (OMSP) is being utilized at the Area Office? (Employee participation is not required but should be encouraged). Are OMSP results of employee medical examinations being forwarded to the Medical Review Officer (USPHS-DFOH) by the local provider? (P&P 235.0-ARS, ARS Occupational Medical Surveillance Program, April 3, 2002)
  
- Determine whether all active teleworkers at the Area Office have current, approved agreements on file with the designated Area telework recordkeeper (i.e. Exhibit 1 of P&P 402.5, the REE Telework Program dated January 1, 2005.)

## CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – AREA OFFICE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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

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

### 5.01 Voice/Data/Video Telecommunications

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

- Per REE Bulletin 07-002, Area Offices and 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. Area Offices and 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 Area Office IT acquisitions as mentioned above since April 11, 2007, and confirm whether the Area Office 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.

The CARE Team should confirm how the Area Office is monitoring the Location IT acquisitions with regard to this policy and if they are coordinating the reviews through their AITS and with the ARS IT AAR Coordinator. The CARE Team should recommend that the Area Office create written policy, if not already

established, to ensure that they are able to monitor the Location IT acquisitions with regard to this policy effectively.

- Does the Area Office 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 Area Offices may not be able to comply with some provisions of this requirement because they are using university or state services that are mandatory for their site.

The CARE Team should review monthly telecommunications bills via paper copy, TUMS, or PCMS to see whether the Area Office 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 Area Office is receiving FTS2001 monthly reports. Some Area Offices do receive monthly reports and some do not. The CARE Team should note exceptions in the report with the reason the Area Office 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 Area Office 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. Area Offices 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 Area Office 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 Area Office that they contact the ARS TMACO for additional vendor support to ensure that they are maximizing their monthly wireless cost savings.

- Does the Area Office 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 Area Office 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 Area Office 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 Area Office plan to replace/upgrade this equipment? Contact the REE RFM for assistance.

If the Area Office uses radios, telemetry, or GPS equipment to transmit data, it must have authorization for a Government radio frequency on file (per USDA 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, the Area Office must have the Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) in hand. Ideally, the Area Office should have the

RFA prior to purchasing equipment. NOTE: Requests for new radio frequency assignments take at least 6 months and often much longer, so planning is important.

Area Offices 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 Area Offices when respective RFAs are due for review.

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

- Does the Area Office 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 Area Offices would have no need for such items, there may be some Area Offices/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, Area Offices 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 Area Office'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 Area Office 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 Area Office 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 Information Collection Officer, on 202-720-4030.

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

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

#### 5.05 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?

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

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

#### 5.06 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 REE Issuances Manager, on 202-720-5507.

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

- Is the Area Office using the latest version of administrative issuances that are on the P&P Web site? If not, why not? Are these issuances in a format that is usable by the Area Office and or its Locations? If the Area Office is using issuances that have been canceled or replaced, the CARE Team should list the number, title, and

date of these issuances as well as the reason. This will be used to help rewrite existing issuances so that they will better serve the organization.

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

#### 5.07 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 Area Office or its Locations encountering any problems ordering forms from the Beltsville Service Center, Beltsville, Maryland?

Any Area Office 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.

- Are printed envelopes or letterhead ordered?

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

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

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

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

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

#### 5.09 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.

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

The Area Office and its Locations are required to forecast planned acquisitions of dedicated telecommunications services and equipment in its annual ARMP package (see Administrator’s annual ARMP “kickoff” letter). Due to special Departmental mandates for telecommunications, all such equipment, regardless of cost, must be included in the forecast. The CARE Team should review the Area Office’s last ARMP package to see if any dedicated telecommunications services and equipment were forecasted and make a note of that on the report.

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

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

#### 5.10 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 Area Office have a public-facing Web site?  
Provide the following information for the Area Office’s public-facing Web site(s). If there is more than one public-facing Web site, please duplicate requested information.  
Web Site Base URL: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Is the Web site compliant with USDA regulations?

USDA Directive “Home Page Development and Maintenance,” DR3430-001 can be found at <http://www.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR3430-001.htm>. Particular attention should be paid to Accessibility in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

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

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

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

Is the Area Office experiencing any problems getting information updated on the ARS Web site? Each Area Office should verify its relevant information and submit needed updates as outlined in the “Web Site Content” section of the FAQ listed here: [http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/SP\\_FAQ\\_2.0.pdf](http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/SP_FAQ_2.0.pdf) . For assistance, send an e-mail to [webmaster@ars.usda.gov](mailto:webmaster@ars.usda.gov).

- Does the Area Office make best use of existing Collaboration/Intranet communication services rather than duplicating them? Each Area Office should look to the ARS Intranet/Sharepoint platform for its online collaboration needs. Users should contact their Area IT Specialist or e-mail [sharepoint@ars.usda.gov](mailto:sharepoint@ars.usda.gov) for assistance.
- Is the Area Office or any of its Locations experiencing any problems updating information in the REE Directory? The REE Directory contains information on all ARS employees. Each Area Office should verify personnel and locator information on <https://reedir.arsnet.usda.gov> and submit needed updates. A link to the listing of

assigned updaters for each site is available at the top of any employee's details page.

### 5.11 e-Authentication

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

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

Are employees at the Area Office 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?

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

The USDA 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 Area Office or its Locations 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](mailto: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 – AREA OFFICE 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 management officials believe that adequate support (e.g., guidance/instructions/Agency P&P issuances, financial reviews for dealing with problems or issues, etc.) is given from ARS Headquarters to manage and control Agency programs, assets, and resources.

### 6.01 CRIS Accountability

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

In order to do so, review the Area's most current CRIS Activities Module (CAM) report. Determine whether there are deviations in planned versus actual expenditures of more than plus or minus 5 percent or \$50,000, whichever is less. If so, determine whether approvals were obtained for these expenditure variances. If approvals were not obtained, cite what CRIS is not in compliance, and the percentage or amount in variance. (Policy and Procedure Number 620.0)

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

### 6.02 Research Cost

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

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

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

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

6.03 ARMPS Preparation/Implementation

- Inquire whether the ARMP process adequately allows the Area Office to prepare and update a comprehensive detailed annual operating plan for spending funds and accomplishing program objectives. Document any suggestions for improvement.
- Document the process the Area Office uses to manage the development of the ARMPS for their Area. For example, what process does the Area use to develop IRC/SRC or communicate with their Locations specific requirements of the ARMPS.
- Does the Area Office have the latest ARMPS instructions? Do they feel the instructions are clear, concise, timely, and easy to understand?

6.04 Allocations

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

6.05 Salary Estimates/Tracking

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

6.05-1 Salary Lapse Reporting

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

6.06 Period-End Estimates

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

6.07 Prior-Year Funding

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

#### 6.08 Prompt Payment

- Document which transactions the Area Office is processing directly in FFIS and determine if they are experiencing problems with interest penalties.
- Document the process the Area Office uses to review items in FFIS-SUSF to ensure transactions are processed in a timely manner so as not to incur interest penalties.

#### 6.09 Claims for and Against the Government

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

#### 6.10 Collections

In accordance with procedures in the FMM, Chapter 2600; P&P326.0; Bulletin 02-314; and Bulletin 05-305:

- Ensure that a collections official has been properly designated by inspecting their letter of designation from the Area Office. Ensure that they are aware of all responsibilities.
- Ensure that all collections (cash, checks, etc.) received are properly secured and that they are promptly deposited/credited into the lock box to the proper miscellaneous receipt or appropriated fund account.
- Ensure that proper vendor codes are being used and that the Area pseudo code is used as little as possible. The pseudo code should never be used when depositing trust fund or reimbursable agreement checks.

#### 6.11 Accounting/CATS

- Determine how often the Area Office accesses FFIS-SUSF. Document the process the Area Office uses to ensure that SUSF transactions are processed in a timely manner.
- Ensure that there is effective coordination between CATS and other Agency systems (e.g., ARMPS, FFIS, SAMS, ARIS, etc.). The Current Year column of

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

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

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

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

#### 6.12 Status of Funds

- Ensure that fundholders receive monthly status of funds reports from CATS in accordance with Directive 325.1. Although not required, it is suggested that fundholders also receive SAMS “Liability to MU” reports.
- Inquire whether the reports are adequate for the fundholder’s needs. If not, explain.
- Ensure that each fundholder reviews detailed financial transactions charged against their accounts from CATS printouts at least 3 times a year to determine if the documents belong to the MU. If there have been invalidly charged obligations, explain.

#### 6.12-1 CRIS Activities Module (CAM)

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

#### 6.12-2 Cuff Records

- What efforts does the Area Office employ to ensure their Locations are using CATS and providing adequate financial support to their fundholders so that cuff

records are not maintained? ARS P&P 325.1, CATS will be used by employees throughout ARS as the only funds control system. No other system (either manual or automated) will be used or supported.

### 6.13 Travel

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

- Verify that Area Office 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 Area Office travel files.
- Determine if controls are in place to ensure that personal travel, when commingled with official travel, is not charged to the Government. In order to do so, review travel authorizations and travel vouchers for cases of mixed travel and make sure days of personal expenses were not charged to the Government.
- **VERY IMPORTANT.** In accordance with the General Records Schedule, paper copies of transmitted transactions (bearing the original signatures of all parties) and supporting documents (e.g., receipts) must be retained for a 6-year, 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.)

- Ensure that Area FATA (Federal Agency Travel Administrator) for GovTrip are properly trained and an AD-1143 is on file.
- Ensure that Level 6 FATAs with “override” authority use that authority only in emergency situations and when they have a signed hardcopy authorization or voucher.

#### 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 Area Offices forward all requests for actual expense to the Director, FMD and that on approvals are made at the Area level. All GovTrip travel routing lists should have an “actual expense” expense condition that will require specific approval.

#### 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.

#### 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 Area'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 GovTrip and their 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.
- Ensure that Area Office regularly reconciles their CBA account; this reconciliation should be completed at least monthly. The reconciliation should include reviewing and ensuring that all travel using the CBA is vouchered promptly to keep the CBA out of a delinquent position. The Area Office should be resolving all discrepancies including requesting refunds for canceled travel where refunds are available.

#### 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

- Ensure that Area Office approves all foreign travel as required.
- Ensure Area Office processes all foreign travel documents promptly and enforces USDA policy on obtaining official passports, visas and country clearances in advance of travel. Ensure that Area Office does not approve or allow foreign travel without proper documentation (as required in the ATR).
- Inquire whether the Area 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.

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

#### 6.14 Utility Accounts

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

#### 6.15 Agreement Accounting

##### 6.15-1 Research Support Agreement (RSA) Expenditure Tracking

- Ensure that the Area Office is establishing information in the HHS-PMS system to authorize obligation/payment of RSA's. When funds have been fully

expended, ensure the Area is closing out the account in a timely manner to minimize the charge from HHS to the Agency for managing these accounts.

#### 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 AFBO in accordance with Bulletin 03-309.
- Document the process the Area uses to communicate authorization to spend funds to the Locations. Trust fund agreements require an upfront payment from the cooperator and documentation in FFIS before work may begin.
- Review agreement files and ensure the following:
  - There is a copy of the fully executed agreement.
  - The appropriate tables have been completed in FFIS (VEND, ACXT, PGMT, DVAL).
  - Funds have been posted in ARIS.
  - Checks have been received and deposited appropriately (for trust funds or type 63 Reimbursables) and an A2/A3 has been processed through SUSF (FFIS) (05-305).
  - Funds have been allocated by BPMS.
  - A BL has been created in FFIS for the allocated amount. NOTE: A \$0 BL is required in order for the A2/A3 to process and reflect correctly.
  - A CAN (common agreement number) has been identified for all USDA cooperators (found on the agreement and in the VEND record).
  - IPSC transfer has been completed or waiver received.
- When an agreement is expired, document the process the Area takes to close out the account.
- Document the process the Area takes to ensure funds are carried over correctly to the new fiscal year and that all years of the agreement reconcile to the carry over balance.

#### 6.15-3 Sales of Assets

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

- Ensure that the Area Office is following the required exchange/sale procedures for the applicable types of property (i.e. vehicles, qualified personal property, etc). Review the files to determine if requirements for sale/exchange funds are

being met. If not, explain.

#### 6.15-4 Quarters

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

- Review files to ensure that employee quarters payments are made through proper coding of Time and Attendance reports to accomplish payroll deductions. (Collections that are not received through payroll deductions must be paid into the Treasury Miscellaneous Receipt Account and thus are not available to the Location for obligation.)
- Review files to determine whether quarters rental receipts are used only for upkeep of the Government residences, as required. If not explain.

#### 6.15-5 Revolving Fund

- Determine if the Area Office has a university (or cooperator) administered “revolving fund” composed of proceeds from the sale of Location animals, crops, or related by-products. If yes, provide the dollar amount, and describe the record keeping responsibilities between ARS and the university (or cooperator).
- Ensure that the anticipated funding amount is annotated on the ARMP.
- Determine if ARS employees have the authority to authorize (or cause) expenditures to be made from this fund. If yes, explain if they are doing so according to the terms of the MOU or agreement. An ARS official may not, under any circumstances, approve by signatory authority any obligation documents covered under a revolving fund. Review the files to determine whether this may be happening. If so, explain.

#### 6.16 Reference Manuals

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

#### 6.17 Training

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

functional responsibilities.

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

6.18 Budget/Fiscal Records Management

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

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW – AREA OFFICE  
OUTREACH, DIVERSITY, and EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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

References include Departmental Regulation (DR) No. 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 4300-07, Processing EEO Complaints of Discrimination; DR 4300-010, Civil Rights Accountability Policy; and DR 4710-001, Alternative Dispute Resolution.

7.0            Special Emphasis Programs

- Verify how the Area Office initiates and conducts programs or other activities as one method to increase awareness/representation in an effort to build and maintain a diverse and high-quality workforce. (This includes special observance programs, display of special observance month posters, and other educational and awareness activities).
- Verify how the Area/Location employees are informed and encouraged to attend the Special Emphasis Programs and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Diversity or other Committee activities (e-mails, posters, etc.).

7.01           Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

- Verify recruitment and outreach efforts conducted by the Area to increase awareness of ARS programs and activities to increase diversity in the workplace. **NOTE:** This includes visits to schools, tours, direct contact with local community resources, cooperative efforts with universities, and professional public and private organizations, etc. Verify results of those efforts (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 Area's Web site has links to the ARS Career Web site ([www.ars.usda.gov/careers](http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers)) and the Office of Personnel and Management USAJOBS ([www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)) Web sites. NOTE: Encourage the Area to add a contact name and telephone number/e-mail address for individuals seeking student employment.
- 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., are charts distributed?
- Verify the documentation of identified barriers to diversity in the workplace and the status of the plans developed to eliminate those barriers.
- Verify coordination with the Human Resources Division or other ARS entities in the efforts to eliminate identified barriers to diversity in the workplace.

#### 7.02 Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities

- Are you aware of the reasonable accommodation process? If so, who would you contact to request a reasonable accommodation?
- Verify how employees are made aware of the reasonable accommodation process.
- Verify 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 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 Area employees have completed the current mandatory 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?

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 Area Office? 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 – AREA OFFICE EXTRAMURAL AGREEMENTS

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

### 8.0 Extramural Agreements Program (General)

References: Extramural Agreements Division (EAD) Web site:

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/index.htm>; Types of Extramural Agreements:

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/agreement-types.htm>; ARIS User Guide

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 Area 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 Area.

Interview the Location personnel via phone or e-mail to determine the level of customer service provided by the Area.

Interview the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) involved in the agreements process to document their concerns, comments, and/or suggestions about the following:

- ARIS/AIMS requirements.
- Customer service received from Headquarters, EAD.
- Agreements processing, approval, and turn-around times.
- Training needs.
- Overall improvement(s) to the extramural agreements process.

Interview the Area ADO and Extramural Agreements staff to verify the following:

- The ADO has a Certificate for Delegation of Authority for Extramural Agreements granted by the Director, EAD.
  - 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 Policies and Procedures (P&P) 700.0 “Delegation of Authority for Authorized Departmental Officers?”

- 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 ARS/AIMS.

**Note: The Standard Cooperative Agreement (StCA) is not entered into ARIS/AIMS**

- Excluding the StCA, does the Area Office accept paper copies of agreement request packages from the Locations?
- Excluding the StCA, does the Area Office use any other system in place of ARIS/AIMS to produce the agreement or award documents?
- Does the ADO utilize e-Forms or the EAD Web site to complete the REE-451 and Statement of Work (SOW) for the StCA (Bulletin 08-703)?

**Note: If necessary, provide assistance by showing the ADO the forms in e-Forms and/or the EAD Web site (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/forms.htm>).**

- Verify there are no active supplements to the Master Memorandum of Understanding, Individual Memorandum of Understandings, or Standard Memorandum of Understandings in place (Bulletin 03-700).
- Verify the ADO/Agreements Specialist is aware of Grants.gov procedures and that the Grants.gov electronic application process is utilized in the Area.

**Note: If necessary, provide assistance by showing the ADO/Agreements Specialist the User Instructions for Grants.gov on the EAD Web site (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/agreements/files/UserInstructionsGrantsGov.doc>).**

- Verify the ADO has issued written notification appointing the employee as ADODR for the project or program (P&P 701.0).
  - Has the ADO ensured eligibility of the proposed ADODR by verifying the position category, completion of ADODR training, and ensuring that the proposed ADODR is not currently under suspension or revocation action?
  - Has the ADO ensured that the ADODR is performing the duties within their delegated authority?

- Verify the ADO is performing the following:
  - Providing advice and guidance on the administrative requirements for extramural agreements.
  - Ensuring cooperator eligibility.
  - Ensuring that all agreements are in compliance with Federal statutes and regulations, applicable OMB circulars, and ARS policy.
  - Ensuring complete and accurate entry in ARIS/AIMS (ARS-416/417, Incoming/Outgoing Agreement information).
  - Assisting in the development of the budget and ensuring all applicable direct and indirect costs are documented.
  - Conducting negotiations and approving all final terms and conditions of the agreements and budget.
  - Authorizing and approving payment requests and financial status reports.
  - Providing technical direction to the cooperator regarding program and administrative requirements within the scope and terms of the agreement.
  - Preparing justifications for funding increase/decrease and extensions of time.
  - Initiating and completing agreement closeout.

#### 8.1 Research Support Agreement

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

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

Determine if the RSA is used in the Area. If yes:

- Determine who serves as the ADO for the RSA(s).

- Verify the Area 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 Location Level:
    - The ADO has a Level 1 Delegation of Authority granted by the Director, EAD to establish the RSA.
    - Verify that the Area Office has provided the Location with an e-mail or letter, indicating who is responsible for negotiating the Indirect Cost Rate (ICR).
  - If the RSA is administered at the Area by the ADO, verify the following:
    - Utilizing the AEAR, verify that the RSA was entered in ARIS/AIMS.
    - 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 time frame 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 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 Management Report (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.).
- Determine 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 being submitted to ARS Operations Section, National Finance Center (NFC) or Area Budget and Fiscal Office (ABFO) for certification and processing.

- **For Department of Health and Human Services/Payment Management System 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 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.

## 8.2 Pre-Award Review, Documentation and Support

These requirements apply to all agreements types, unless otherwise specified.

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

Interview the ADO to determine the following:

- Is the ADO aware of the resources, Bulletins, and P&Ps available on the EAD Web site?
- Is the ADO aware and familiar with 7 CFR Part 550, *General Administrative Policy for Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreements*?
- Verify that the Area’s “official” files contain the following:

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

- A copy of the approved ARIS documents.
- A fully executed copy of the agreement (REE-451).
- SOW or Proposal.
- Approved Budget (REE-454 or 455).
- The file may also include the following:
  - Copies of amendment(s).

- Copies of the negotiated Indirect Cost Rate schedule (if ARS is reimbursing indirect costs).
  - Justification for funding increases and period of performance extensions.
  - Non-competitive justification (for grants only).
  - Approved AD-672 or other documentation to support the use of soft funds on a SCA or grant.
  - Copies of Financial and Performance reports.
  - Copies of correspondence.
  - Copies of internal e-mails and notes.
- Identify a random sampling of the “official files” and verify the following:
- Does the SOW properly identify project goals/objectives, mutual interest and responsibilities?
  - Has ARS properly budgeted for indirect costs on incoming agreements? (Indirect Program Support Costs – currently 10 percent of total direct costs)
  - Verify agreements do not exceed the 5-year statutory limitation.
- Identify a random sampling of the SCAs (non-assistance cooperative agreements), and verify the following:
- The Cooperator is providing a resource contribution of no less than 20 percent of the total amount of Federal funding provided to the Cooperator throughout the life of the agreement.
  - Determine the Cooperator’s performing organization type on the REE-26 and verify the following:
    - SCAs awarded to State Cooperative Institutions under the authority of 7 USC 3318(b), do not provide for the reimbursement of indirect costs (IDC) or tuition remission. Reference: 7 USC 3319, Restriction on Treatment of Indirect Costs and Tuition Remission.
    - SCAs awarded to Non-profit organizations limit payment of indirect costs to 10 percent of the total direct costs. Reference: General Provisions to the USDA Appropriations Act; REE-454, column 1.
- If the StCA is administered at the Area:

- Verify all StCAs awarded after September 16, 2008, only include the Federal Tort Claims Act as the “make whole” provision (Bulletin 08-703).
- Verify the ADO is using the new, standardized REE-451 and SOW for all StCA awarded after September 16, 2008. The forms are available in e-Forms and on the EAD Web site.

### 8.3 Post Award and Administration

These requirements apply to all agreements types, unless otherwise specified.

Interview the ADO to verify the following:

- The ADO maintains the “official” files.
- Does the ADO distribute fully executed copies of the agreements to the ADODR, ABFO, NFC, and PA?
- Does the ADO provide the FFIS vendor ID to NFC for obligation/payment purposes?
- Are the performance and financial reports received and accepted by the ADO and ADODR and copies maintained in the “official” file as prescribed in the terms and conditions of the agreement?
- Are all payments processed via electronic funds transfer (includes HHS-PMS payments)? If not, verify the cooperator/recipient has a certified exemption from this requirement in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996.

### 8.4 Close Out

These requirements apply to all agreements types, unless otherwise specified.

Locate the Area’s expired files and verify the following:

- Final performance and financial reports are received and accepted by the ADODR and copies maintained in the “official” file. If reports have not been received, verify the ADO has attempted to obtain the reports.
- All obligated funds have been disbursed to the cooperator/recipient or deobligated by the ADO.
- The ADO is taking action to close agreements in HHS-PMS when agreements are

“officially” closed and that the Authorized Amount, Distributed Amount, and Charged Amount match.

- Verify closed files are forwarded to the appropriate regional Records Management Center.
- If there are no expired files present in the Area, request a copy of the SF-135, Record Transmittal and Receipt, which reports the transferring of files to the regional Records Management Center. Verify that the records have been properly retained.

#### 8.5 Agreements Information Management System (AIMS)

Interview the Area ADO/Agreements Specialist, Program Analyst, ABFO, Deputy Area Director, and Location/Management Unit (Center Director/Location Director, Administrative Officer, Location Support Staff, ADODRs) staff involved in the AIMS data entry process to document their concerns, comments, and/or suggestions.

- Determine the need for additional AIMS training at all levels within the Area.
- Determine if additional support from HQ/EAD and/or the AIMS Helpdesk is needed and if there are suggestions for improving the AIMS data entry processes.