Dear Dr. Fretz:

Thank you for the opportunity to review a very progressive process in addressing current issues relating to Civil Rights and Affirmative Action in your MCE Affirmative Action Plan (AAP). We commend you and your staff for the care and evaluative process that went forth in developing a forward look in assuring comprehensive coverage in outreach in your program delivery methodology.

Your AAP established, in a comprehensive format the standards and procedures which govern employment and program practices in the operation of your Extension programs. Within the context of equal opportunity for both employment and program the law requires the officials of an organization to make employment decisions, to do more than ensure employment neutrality and program inclusion with regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and disability. The Plan requires additional effort made to recruit, employ, promote qualified members of under represented groups and to conduct conclusive outreach efforts in programming in Extension. The emphasis in your AAP is aggressive and comprehensive in its approach to insuring comprehensive employment and program coverage, and is commendable. We are especially excited about your parity definition and the application of that process to assure the ability to determine good program methodology and to assess program outreach requirements. Further, we agree with your process of determining “all reasonable efforts” that insure that program inclusion involves minority and non minority clientele. Your process is further defined in your system of “self-evaluation.” While these techniques and systems are progressive, they are not overburdening and appear to be reasonable in the ability to accomplish. The inclusion of the Limited English Proficiency Policy (LEP) is both current thinking and defined. Your emphasis on the spanish-speaking population is most commendable. A review of your LEP Policy demonstrates its flexibility, in the framework there is a system to insure that as other racial/ethnic groups, with English as a second language, become a part of the various Maryland communities they can aggressively become a part of the Extension program. The achievements of the requirements noted in your AAP, successfully implemented, should result in a strengthened equal opportunity program and a more diverse workforce.
Dr. Thomas E. Fretz

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The Plan is approved. The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service stands ready to assist you, as needed, in the implementation of this Plan. Again, thank you and your staff for continued support of the Department of Agriculture’s nondiscrimination rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

Colien Hefferan
Administrator