

Definitions of terms used in Diversity Committee goals document:

1. Underserved groups -

Individuals and groups who have not participated in or have received limited benefits from USDA or NRCS programs which may improve their quality of life and/or the environment. Examples of historically underserved are farmers/ranchers and landowners/operators with limited resources, minority groups (including American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Aleuts), women, and the physically challenged. Underserved farmers may also include small farmers, organic farmers, and other farmers with production practices that are different from most farmers in the area. Underserved non-farmers may include members of religious and ethnic groups, and rural and urban communities which can benefit from USDA-NRCS programs and technical assistance. [NRCS Outreach Division <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/about/outreach/underserved.html>]

2. Socially disadvantaged group means a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Socially disadvantaged groups include, but are not limited to, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. The Secretary will determine on a case-by-case basis whether additional groups qualify under this definition, either at the Secretary's initiative or in response to a written request with supporting explanation.

[This is the definition used by the USDA program that funds outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged groups. (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1113>)]

3. Limited resource farmers have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Gross farm sales average \$40,000 or less in each of the last three years, and there is no non-farm income.
- Total household net income, farm and non-farm, is 75 percent or less of the non-metropolitan median income level for the state or county.
- Lack of access to capital, labor, or equipment.
- Farm or ranch size is significantly smaller than average size.
- Social, cultural, customs or language barriers, minimal awareness of USDA programs, limited management skills, the level of formal education is below the county average or undereducated, and are less likely to take business risks and adopt new technology.

[This is the definition used by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS note: The fifth category ... (is) being bypassed by the institutions that were set up to serve them. This is because agencies and institutions have not changed along with the technological and societal changes that have occurred during the past half-century.]