

Conciliation Agreement
Between the
U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs
and
Prairie Quest Inc.

I. Preliminary Statement

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) evaluated the Prairie Quest Inc. (Contractor) establishment located at 4211 Hobson Court, Suite A, Fort Wayne, IN, beginning on October 22, 2020. OFCCP found that Contractor failed to comply with the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. § 4212 (VEVRAA) and their respective implementing regulations at 41 CFR 60-300.5. OFCCP notified Contractor of the specific violations and the corrective actions required in a Notice of Violation (NOV) issued on June 9, 2021.

In the interest of resolving the violations without engaging in further legal proceedings and in exchange for sufficient consideration described in this document, OFCCP and Contractor enter into this Conciliation Agreement (Agreement) and its attachments, and the parties agree to all the terms therein.

II. General Terms and Conditions

1. In exchange for Contractor's fulfillment of all its obligations in this Agreement, OFCCP will not institute administrative or judicial enforcement proceedings under E.O. 11246, Section 503, and/or VEVRAA based on the violation(s) alleged in the NOV. However, OFCCP retains the right to initiate legal proceedings to enforce this Agreement if Contractor violates any provision of this Agreement, as set forth in Paragraph 11, below. Nothing in this Agreement precludes OFCCP from initiating enforcement proceedings based on future compliance evaluations or complaint investigations.
2. OFCCP may review Contractor's compliance with this Agreement. As part of this review, OFCCP may require written reports, inspect the premises, interview witnesses, and examine and copy documents. Contractor will permit access to its premises during normal business hours for these purposes and will provide OFCCP with all hard copy or electronic reports and documents OFCCP requests, including those specified in this Agreement.
3. Nothing in this Agreement relieves Contractor of its obligation to fully comply with the requirements of E.O. 11246, Section 503, VEVRAA, their implementing regulations, or other applicable laws requiring nondiscrimination or equal employment opportunity through affirmative action.
4. Contractor agrees that it will not retaliate against any potential or actual beneficiary of this Agreement or against any person who files a complaint, who has provided information or assistance, or who participates in any manner in any proceeding in this matter.

5. The parties understand the terms of this Agreement and enter into it voluntarily.
6. This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement and represents the complete and final understanding of the parties. This Agreement contains all of the terms binding the parties and it supersedes all prior written and oral negotiations and agreements. Any modifications or amendments to this Agreement must be agreed upon in writing and signed by all parties. If an administrative error is found, OFCCP will work in good faith with all parties to make the corrections.
7. This Agreement becomes effective on the day it is signed by the District Director (Effective Date).
8. If one or more provisions of this Agreement is deemed unlawful or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect.
9. This Agreement will expire sixty (60) days after Contractor submits its final progress report required in Section IV, below, unless OFCCP notifies Contractor in writing before the expiration date that Contractor has failed to fulfill all of its obligations under the Agreement. In this instance, the Agreement is automatically extended until the date that OFCCP determines that Contractor has met all of its obligations under the Agreement.
10. If Contractor violates this Agreement:
 - a. The procedures at 41 CFR 60-300.63 will govern:
 - i. OFCCP will send Contractor a written notice stating the alleged violation(s) and summarizing any supporting evidence.
 - ii. The Contractor shall have fifteen (15) days from receipt of the notice to respond, except in those cases in which such a delay would result in irreparable injury to the employment rights of affected employees or applicants.
 - iii. If Contractor is unable to demonstrate that it has not violated the Agreement, or if OFCCP alleges irreparable injury, enforcement proceedings may be initiated immediately without issuing a show cause notice or proceeding through any other requirement.
 - iv. In the event of a breach of this Agreement by the Contractor, OFCCP may elect to proceed to a hearing on the entire case and seek full make-whole relief, and not be limited to the terms in the Agreement.
 - b. Contractor may be subject to the sanctions set forth in 41 C.F.R. 60-300.66, and/or other appropriate relief for violating this Agreement.

11. Contractor does not admit any violation of the Executive Order, Section 503 or VEVRAA, nor has there been an adjudication on the merits regarding any such violation.
12. OFCCP may seek enforcement of this Agreement itself and is not required to present proof of any underlying violations resolved by this Agreement.
13. The parties understand and agree that nothing in this Agreement is binding on other governmental departments or agencies other than the United States Department of Labor.
14. Each party shall bear its own fees and expenses with respect to this matter.
15. This Agreement is limited to the facts of this case. Neither this Agreement, nor any part of the negotiations that occurred in connection with this Agreement, shall constitute admissible evidence with respect to any OFCCP policy, practice or position in any lawsuit, legal proceeding, administrative proceeding, compliance evaluation, or audit, except for legal or administrative proceedings concerning the enforcement or interpretation of this specific Agreement.
16. All references to “days” in this Agreement are calendar days. If any deadline for an obligation scheduled to be performed under this Agreement falls on a weekend or a Federal holiday, that deadline will be extended to the next business day.

III. Technical Violations and Remedies

1. **Violation:** During the period October 22, 2018 through October 21, 2020, Prairie Quest Inc. failed to advise the employment service delivery system (ESDS) that it is a federal contractor that desires priority referrals of protected veterans for job openings at all locations within the state, and provide the employment service delivery system with the name and address of each of its hiring locations within the state and the contact information for the contractor official responsible for hiring at each location, in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300.5(a)(4). Specifically, Contractor has not included requests for priority referrals in its prior job postings for the period with the ESDS, but has included the request for such referrals in its current job postings going forward from January 1, 2021.

Remedy: With its initial listing, and as subsequently needed to update the information, Prairie Quest Inc. must advise the employment service delivery system that it is a federal contractor that desires priority referrals of protected veterans for job openings at all locations within the state, and provide the employment service delivery system with the name and address of each of its hiring locations within the state and the contact information for the contractor official responsible for hiring at each location, in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300.5(a)(4). Should any of the information in the disclosures change since it was last reported to the ESDS, Prairie Quest Inc. shall provide updated information simultaneously with its next job listing.

2. **Violation:** During the period October 22, 2018 through October 21, 2020, Prairie Quest Inc. failed to send written notification of its policy related to its affirmative action efforts to all subcontractors, including subcontracting vendors and suppliers, requesting appropriate action on their part, in violation of 41 CFR 60-300.44(f)(1)(ii). Specifically, the Contractor did conduct each activity, but only from 10/14/19 to date.

Remedy: Prairie Quest Inc. must send written notification of its policy related to its affirmative action efforts to all subcontractors, including subcontracting vendors and suppliers, requesting appropriate action on their part, in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300.44(f)(1)(ii).

3. **Violation:** During the period October 22, 2018 through October 21, 2020, Prairie Quest Inc. failed to invite applicants to inform whether the applicant believes that he or she is a veteran protected by VEVRAA in violation of 41 CFR 60-300.42(a-b). Specifically, the Contractor failed to provide a record of having offered, pre-offer, self-identification of protected veterans, aside from 2 protected veteran records of 28 protected veteran hires from the past 3 AAP years, and none from applicants not hired during the same period.

Remedy: Prairie Quest Inc. shall invite applicants to inform it whether the applicant believes that he or she is a veteran protected by VEVRAA, as required by 41 CFR 60-300.42(a-b). More specifically, Prairie Quest Inc. shall invite applicants for employment, prior to an offer of employment, to voluntarily identify as a protected veteran. Additionally, Prairie Quest Inc. shall invite applicants for employment, after an offer of employment but before applicants begin their job duties, to voluntarily inform it whether the applicant believes that he or she is a protected veteran. Prairie Quest Inc. may invite the applicant to also indicate if he or she belongs to one or more of the specific categories of protected veterans, as defined by 41 CFR 60-300.2(q). All invitations to self-identify as a protected veteran must comply with the requirements of 41 CFR 60-300.42(c). Prairie Quest Inc. must keep all self-identification information confidential and maintain it in a separate data analysis file, rather than in its personnel or medical files, in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300.42(e).

4. **Violation:** During the period October 22, 2018 through October 21, 2020, Prairie Quest Inc. failed to conduct an assessment of its Outreach and Recruitment efforts for the previous three years, to evaluate their effectiveness in identifying and recruiting qualified protected veterans in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300(f)(3).

Remedy: Prairie Quest Inc. shall conduct an assessment of its Outreach and Recruitment efforts on an annual basis to evaluate their effectiveness in identifying and recruiting qualified protected veterans in accordance with 41 CFR 60-300.44(f)(3). Contractor has identified and implemented an annual plan of assessment going forward from January 1, 2021.

5. **Violation:** During the period October 22, 2018 through October 21, 2020, Prairie Quest Inc. failed to document and maintain the required data pertaining to applicants and

hires, in violation of 41 CFR 60-300.44(k). Specifically, the contractor only began implementing the policy January 1, 2021, at the start of the current AAP year.

Remedy: Prairie Quest Inc. must document the following computations or comparisons pertaining to applicants and hires, on an annual basis, and will maintain this data for three (3) years, as required by 41 CFR 60-300.44 (k):

- (1) the number of applicants who self-identified as protected veterans, or who are otherwise known to be protected veterans;
- (2) the total number of job openings and total number of jobs filled;
- (3) the total number of applicants for all jobs;
- (4) the number of protected veteran applicants hired;
- (5) the total number of applicants hired.

IV. OFCCP Monitoring Period

1. **Recordkeeping.** Contractor agrees to retain all records relevant to the violation(s) cited in Section III above and the reports submitted in compliance with Paragraph 2, below. These records include underlying data and information such as Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and payroll data, job applications and personnel records, and any other records or data used to generate the required reports. Contractor will retain the records until this Agreement expires or for the time period consistent with regulatory requirements, whichever is later.

2. **Contractor Reports.**

Contractor agrees to furnish OFCCP with the following reports during the Monitoring Period. Each report will contain the documentation specified according to the dates scheduled:

- a. Progress Report 1: Due on January 15, 2022 covering the period of July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Documentation of:

- (1) Copy of Prairie Quest Inc.'s current VEVRAA AAP;
- (2) Copy of Prairie Quest Inc.'s evaluation and assessment of its Outreach and Recruitment efforts to identify and recruit qualified protected veteran applicants.
- (3) Results of Prairie Quest Inc.'s VEVRAA Benchmarking activities for the past three (3) years, as outlined in the Remedy for Violation #5.

- (4) Copies of samples of self-identification forms completed within the past 3 years by protected veteran applicants, hires and/or employees.
- b. Progress Report 2: Due on July 15, 2022 covering the period of January 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022.

Documentation of:

- (1) Copy of Prairie Quest Inc.'s current VEVRAA AAP;
- (2) Copy of Prairie Quest Inc.'s evaluation and assessment of its Outreach and Recruitment efforts to identify and recruit qualified protected veteran applicants.
- (3) Results of Prairie Quest Inc.'s VEVRAA Benchmarking activities for the past three (3) years, as detailed and outlined in the Remedy for Violation #5.
- (4) A representative sampling of copies of the OMB-approved self-identification forms for both pre- and post-offer, completed within the past 3 years by protected veteran applicants, hires and/or employees.

Contractor will submit reports to Compliance Officer (b) (7)(C), (b) (7)(E) 46 E. Ohio Street, Room 419, Indianapolis, IN, 46204, email: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)@dol.gov. Contractor and OFCCP have a common interest in the information being provided in the reports pursuant to this Agreement. To the extent any of the reports Contractor provides in accordance with this Agreement are trade secrets, commercial, and/or financial in nature, and customarily kept private or closely-held, and the Contractor believes should remain confidential under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in the event of a FOIA request, Contractor will provide such reports to OFCCP marked as "Confidential". In the event of a FOIA request, OFCCP will promptly notify Contractor of the FOIA request and provide Contractor an opportunity to object to disclosure. OFCCP will withhold disclosure of such reports to the maximum extent allowable by law.

3. **Close of Monitoring Period and Termination of Agreement.** This Agreement shall remain in effect until the monitoring period is completed. The monitoring period will close once OFCCP accepts Contractor's final progress report as set forth in Section II, Paragraph 9 above. If OFCCP fails to notify Contractor in writing within sixty (60) days of the date of the final progress report that Contractor has not fulfilled all of its obligations under the Agreement, OFCCP will be deemed to have accepted the final report and the Monitoring Period and this Agreement will terminate. If OFCCP notifies Contractor within the allotted time that it has not fulfilled all of its obligations, this Agreement is automatically extended until the date that OFCCP determines Contractor has met all of its obligations under the Agreement.

V. SIGNATURES

The person signing this Agreement on behalf of Contractor personally warrants that he or she is fully authorized to do so, that Contractor has entered into this Agreement voluntarily and with full knowledge of its effect, and that execution of this Agreement is fully binding on Contractor.

This Agreement is hereby executed by and between the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and Prairie Quest Inc., 4211 Hobson Court, Suite A, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815-8655.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Stacey Smith
President and CEO
Prairie Quest Inc.
4211 Hobson Court, Suite A
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815-8655

DATE: 6/24/2021

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

David A. Smith
District Director
Midwest Region - Indianapolis District Office

6/25/2021

DATE: _____

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (7)(E), (b) (6)
Compliance Officer
Indianapolis District Office

DATE: 6/24/21