ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Patricia Faye Vaughan

Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Original recording made 24 February 2012

at Huntsville, Arkansas

Interviewed by:

Susan Sanders Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

Recorded, transcribed and edited by:

Madlyn Carolyn Mason Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member







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Oral History Program

Susan Sanders, Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member

24 February 2012

This an audio recording of Patricia Faye Vaughan, a member of the Madison County Extension Homemakers Council. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Pat is answering questions asked by Madison County Extension Homemakers Council Member, Susan Sanders.

Questions and comments by Susan are in boldface type; Pat's responses and comments are in lightface type.

I am Susan Sanders. This is the interview with Pat Vaughan for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. This is being done February 24, 2012, at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office in Huntsville, Arkansas, in Madison County.

The audio recordings and transcript of this interview will be donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas.

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Are you willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others.

Yes.

First, I'd like you to give your complete legal name and spell it for me, and then tell me the city and county in which you presently reside.

My name is Patricia Vaughan. P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A. Middle name is Faye, F-A-Y-E. Last name is Vaughan, V-A-U-G-H-A-N. And I live in Hindsville, Arkansas.

Great. Pat, this is going to be a very informal interview, I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers Program—the good times and the challenges.

What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers Program? As a member?

Let's see, member. I have been a member of the Extension Homemakers Club for—and I'd like to think that I'm a devoted member.

How did you learn about the Extension Homemakers Program?

I first become acquainted with the Extension Homemakers plan when I was in junior high school. I joined a 4-H Club after school, and the leaders in that club were volunteer Extension Homemaker women. And I just remember how pretty this lady was that was our leader and how nice I thought she was and I thought she just hung the moon.

I bet she did. Many Homemakers were 4-H leaders and devoted to the youth in the county and they totally helped with all kinds of community activities.

Right.

They were so many people in the community that loved what Extension stood for.

Yes.

How long have you been associated with the program?

Well, when I started 4-H that was in 1955 I—[19]'55 or [19]'56. It seems like when I go backwards, I don't remember as well as I used to but this—that was

when I first came in contact with the Extension Homemakers Club. And, also, that year the Extension Homemakers Clubs in Madison County started a beauty revue. And I was fortunate to be in the first beauty revue in this county. And at that time it was county wide. I mean they really worked to get all the young ladies they could to be in this beauty revue. And they crowned a princess or queen out of each community. And there were many, many little communities at that time in Madison County. And I was fortunate that I was crowned the queen of the little community I lived in which was called Bohannan Mountain. And I want to go ahead and add that after I became a member of the Homemakers Clubs and came to Council, I served as chairman of the beauty revue here in Madison County for several years and really have continued to do some type of work every year whether it's doing the stage or doing the judge's table.

This beauty revue is continuing to this day.

Yes, to this . . .

So 1955 till 2012 is— wow more than 50 years.

That's correct. I think we celebrated the 50th year—pageant somewhere along the line.

Well, they had to have because the 50 years would have been ...

It's 57 now.

Yes, one year I served as the judge right after I moved to this county. And it was a packed house.

Yes, it's always a packed house. It's one of the greatest projects probably that we have in our county right now, where we reach so many people and so many children.

Well, it was really interesting experience for me to serve as a judge because I knew—didn't know anybody in this county at that time. I'd just moved here and it was a—really fun experience because every imaginable type of

personality was on that stage.

That's correct.

And it was great to see so many people participating and that the—kinds of—things that was being judged was not just outward being.

Correct.

It was really exciting to be a judge. What was the first club with which you were associated and what year?

The first club I joined was the Whitener Extension Homemakers Club. And I can't tell you the exact year. It was in maybe 1965 in the middle—middle to the late 1960's. And—I can remember the first meeting just like it was today. It was in the one room Presbyterian church building in Hindsville. And there was not many women there that day or members there that day but there was still—there were three of the charter members still in the club in 1960. They were: Nona Berry, Anna Proctor and Eva Flanagan. And—they were still having club at that time and still kind of pretty active, I think it was just a day that there wasn't—was not that many there.

But I want to share with you about the name Whitener. So many people even in our county today, that doesn't know what the name Whitener or where Whitener is. Whitener was a pretty good-size town in—in western Madison County. It's about two miles west of the city of Hindsville. Whitener was a hub. Whitener was a big town for that—that part of the county. It had—a Post Office, a general store, blacksmith shop . . .

Wow.

... grist mill, and a United States distillery, and a mail route. And my husband's grandfather was the mail—was the mail—was the postmaster and owner of the general store in Whitener. Now, Whitener was a very, very large farming community and so there were a lot of families living in that area at that time so there was quite a few women in the—in that area that were members of the Extension Homemakers.

Great. Whitener would be—on Highway 412?

No, Whitener would have been on what—what we now call Highway 45. But Highway—Highway 45 bypassed the little town in 1946, I believe it was.

Which is what caused it to go.

Which caused the little town to go away and right now the hub of our club even though we still carry the name Whitener—our club—is I guess our little town or our hub for our club, right now—is Hindsville.

How many members are in the Whitener Club now?

We have 15 right now. Fourteen very active.

It is an excellent club, does a great deal of good for the whole county. Are you presently a club member?

Yes.

I guess since you talked about Whitener you are. [Laughs]

I've been an uninterrupted member of the Whitener Club since I joined in the mid-[19]'60's. And—our club is located in the western part of the Madison County and we're in the Ozark District. I think that's the name of our district.

I—I believe that is correct.

I think you told me that.

I believe that is correct. Do you have any special remembrances of that first—well you did, you've already talked about that first meeting and/or the first club.

Do you remember why you joined that particular club?

Well, it was kind of the social thing to do. It was a really, really active club.

That was really the only clubs or organizations that were in the little areas at that time. I knew there was a 4-H and an Extension Homemakers Club so really I joined for education.

Why have you continued to belong to Whitener Extension Homemakers Club?

Well, for education, education and education. Ah—my Extension work is next to my church work. I just can't tell you how meaningful it has been to me to be a member of this club and the things that I have learned, the experiences I've had as a Homemaker. It's just—it's just been a great, large part of my life.

Well, Pat, how involved did you become?

Well, this question, I think, I could be here all day. I think I could be here all day to answer this question. I'm going to highlight as many of them as I can. I held every office in the local club. And I was the—held one—one county office. I served as secretary for several years and I have chaired many club—club projects and county projects. And due to my love of planning and decorating, I have—that I have developed here in the Extension programs—I have just loved—I'm a planner and I'm a decorator. And I've decorated for weddings, I decorate for the church, I decorate for every holiday, if anybody needs anything planned or decorate, I'm able to do it. Or I want to do it. I want to help and I just relate all this to the teachings that I had in Extension Homemakers' work.

I can remember very distinctly whenever we learned the color wheel. We had lessons on decorating in your home. Just even to hanging pictures. Color coordinating your fabric, your curtains, your carpet, your furniture, and—and stuff like that. Another—another one of the committees that I was on I worked so many, many years up at the Madison County Fair. The Extension Homemakers in this county are responsible for the Educational Building. And we have Homemakers in charge of every department in the fair. And I'm sorry I don't know how many different departments as chairman through the years. And I've worked with the 4-H group. I've—I even served eight or 10 years as a fair board member. And I just, like I said, I could just go on and on at the activities that in the meetings and the programs, and projects that I've done in

the last 40 something years.

When I think about Pat Vaughan I think about what a good cook she is because that—that comes to my mind first. So I know that the area of foods is also is a place where you have learned a lot.

Yes, that is one of—I did own a restaurant for 15 years. You know I contribute a lot of the education I had in my Extension Homemakers Club to . . .

The successes.

If one thing that comes from Extension Homemakers, it is you build confidence. You have leadership skills and I bought a restaurant and started—started that with no fear. And I learned to cook. I learned to cook better and I learned to cook a lot of food quickly.

Well, and that restaurant that you no longer own still has a huge reputation all over Northwest Arkansas and my understanding that before I ever moved here that people would be lined up outside the door . . .

Yes.

... and around the corner ...

This was Saturday mornings.

Right. And so, obviously the things that you learned in Extension Homemakers or through Extension and the confidence that you gained there has been a great help to you throughout your life.

Yes—yes, especially 15 years of my life.

Well, I wished you still owned that restaurant because I never got to eat there while you owned it. [*Laughs*]

And I might say that during the 15 years that I was getting up at 3:30 [a.m.] every morning, I was still very active in my Extension Homemakers Club.

And your church, and . . .

Yes.

Well, I marvel at all the things that Pat Vaughan still gets done.

Not as many, but I'm working at it.

[Laughs] OK. Let's see, I guess we had better get on with this interview. [Laughs] We've talked about all the offices and chairmanships and the things that you've done, but I know that you have attended some state Council meetings, because I recall when we had our national meeting that you were involved up to your eyeballs in our wonderful display on the Old State House grounds.

Yes, [I had that] yes, that is probably the highlight of my Extension Homemakers work in over 40 something years. As I look back on it today, I honestly do not know how we accomplished that. But in 1994, the National Extension Homemakers Convention was held in Little Rock. [Editor's Note: The meeting of the National Association for Family and Community Education was held in Little Rock in 1994. The Extension Homemakers changed its named to the Arkansas Association for Family and Community Education at the annual meeting on June 3, 1992; however, the members voted to withdraw from the National Association in September of 1994 and voted to changed the named back to the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council on September 24, 1995.] And we did have four years preparation for this event because they set the meeting dates at least four years ahead on that convention, I think.

And as a club, we decided that we wanted to go to the convention as a club everybody. So we started a fund-raising, so we would have money to attend this convention. And we had sit-down dinners, very formal dinners where couples where invited in, like \$30 a head for an evening meal, [*SS Laughs*] which this was at the Valley Inn Café. But anyway we had bake sales, yard sales, if there was a dollar to be had any where in our community [*SS Laughs*] for three years . . .

You got it.

We got it. And we raised over \$4,000 to pay for—everybody had their room at the convention. And I think it was about a year before the convention date they asked Madison County to do a Quilt Show. Well, they asked our club, which we accepted that challenge to do a Quilt Show as part of the convention. And you know our club has never known what the word no means. We just whatever it is we just take it and go. But we had a Quilt Show that wasn't just like we went into a building and hang quilts with tags on them or lay them on a table. We had an outside, outdoor, quilt show. We had six different scenes in this—in this show. And the scenes were all 8-foot tall or 8-to-20-foot wide. We had front porches, living-room, granny's sewing room, out—I just maybe quilting room, I can't remember all the scenes we had. But we had backdrops, we had quilts, we had furniture, and we finally had to rent a moving van to load all these props in. And we had to have about three or four husbands take us down there, unload, help us set-up. And this was on the outside of the Old State House. It was on the lawn of the Old State House...

I remember. I saw it.

... in Little Rock. And I'm kind of tearing up; I remember that night with the light shining on those quilt displays how beautiful it was.

It was stunning.

And—how, I thought about it the other night, I do not know how we ever managed to do that. But we did and it was well received . . .

Oh, yes.

... by the convention.

It was beautiful. Well, that was an unbelievable memory, first of all. It was really nice. So you have attended several state Council meeting? And there was several here in Fayetteville.

Well, let me tell you about the state—state meetings.

Do you remember the first state Council meeting you attended?

Yes, I remember the first and it was the only state Council meeting I have ever attended. We have a farm. We have cattle and one of our incomes or our main thing on our farm was producing fescue seed, which is a lawn grass and grass seed for farms. And this was a six, a long six-week period and it started in June and the Council—the state meetings were always in June. And this was just not a time and it was, also, hay season and it was just not a time that I could ever leave home. It was our busy season and it just was not. I did—was fortunate enough that they had it one year in Fayetteville at the University of Arkansas, which I'm only 18 miles. And I did get to go back forth on two days to two little sessions. And that's been my only experience. And I can remember at that that time, that must have been in the [19]'70's, that was the first time I had ever heard of mammograms. This was when they first came out.

Yes.

Teaching us the importance of breast examines and mammograms. And that's what I remember from the state convention.

Wow.

I also, did get to attend a national convention. Don't know what year that was, but that was up in Columbia, Missouri. And there was about, I think, six of us that went to Columbia to the national convention. And that was—oh, that was wonderful.

Yes.

Anybody that can attend national convention, I wish more grass-root members could attend more state and national conventions.

What was your favorite event or activity?

Oh, my! My favorite event or activity in Homemakers work.

That's kind of a hard question isn't it.

I think. I think community projects was really one of my favorite things. And,

of course, I love to work at the county fair. But I'm going to share one of the big things that we did in our community. In 1976, Arkansas celebrated its Bicentennial year. [Editor's Note: The United States of America's Bicentennial was in 1976. Arkansas celebrated its Sesquicentennial in 1986.] And we of course, had two years' notice on that, too, so we planned—we planned. We just decided we would build a park, just a park. And with no money, no resources, [SS: laughs] no nothing except we did have the land. There was an old—the old school building had kind of been turned back to the community and it was just sitting up there not being used and didn't look good. So we decided we would just turn about half of that area into a park. So we did.

We spent two years making funds again. [*SS: Laughs*] Here we went. Oh, you know, with our little tin cans and box and we—we went and the response from the community was unreal on that so we did build a park. That included a regular-size, full-size softball field. In front of the park, we built a rock wall. Now this rock wall, the building that was there, the old schoolhouse, was built by the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps].

I know what that is. My Daddy was in that.

OK. And we were—a lot of these projects, came through the county, too. The county judge was so good to help us on this project. He rounded up several of the old men that were on the CCC and even though they were in their 70's and 80's at that time they came out and built us a rock wall that matched the old rock building that they had worked on back in the [19]'30's. So we have a plaque there that says it's the Hindsville Bicentennial Park by the Extension Homemakers. We had a flag pole; we had picnic tables. This was kind of a long thing. It took us over a year on this project. [*SS: Laughs*]

At the same time, we 4-H leaders, the 4-H Club, built a area for the small children and we fenced that in and had little rocking horses in it for little kids and we pulled in old tractor tires for sand boxes and we had swings, and actually it was a beautiful park. Oh, for five years there nearly, probably three nights a week and every weekend you couldn't hardly get a parking place at that park.

It's still used by the community.

Oh, yah, it's still used by the community. So that was one of the—working in the community and doing things for people. And, also, that year that we built the park and we finished it. And we had a dedication which was the Bicentennial event in 1976. So we decided we would just have a little parade in Hindsville. Well, and we were going to have a barbecue and we were going to offer that free and we had musicians and we advertized this. We had over one hundred entries in that parade.

My heavens. People need to understand the size of Hindsville.

Hindsville was 69 right then. The population was 69 at Hindsville.

People need to understand that. More people in the parade that in Hindsville.

That's exactly right. We had—the 4-H had floats. We thee or four businesses in Hindsville and we all had floats; the church had floats; we had riding clubs; we had best decorated bicycle contest for red, white and blue for the Bicentennial, and then that night . . .

I guess everybody in Huntsville was in Hindsville that night . . .

Yes, [*SS: laughs*] I think half of Fayetteville and Springdale, too. But our barbecue that night and our music—we feed over a thousand people at the Bicentennial.

How did you ever afford to do that?

We went around with our little tin cup. I mean our community has been so generous.

And they are. And they still are.

Yes.

And they still are.

So, any way, for about five years we still had that parade and that celebration in September every year. So that was really a highlight of a—and also might add at that time in 1973, we started a rural fire department in Hindsville, the men started that and the women were real instrumental in fund-raising.

Aren't we always?

Yes, to start the fire department.

What has been your least favorite activity?

Well, I can't find—I just don't recall any activity that I didn't like. It was pretty rough for many, many years 'cause [because] we always had the fair in August and that was the week that it was always 100 to 105 degrees and we—we suffered. But I wouldn't say it was my unfavorite because . . .

The fair is always fun.

There is one thing about Extension Homemakers that's not just real blissful, something you want to do and that is—is the keeping the records and the paperwork that it takes, that you have to do as a Homemaker for your club because they have to be turned in to justify what we are doing. They have to know what we have learned. And there is a lot—lot of paperwork. I sometimes say it takes 10 hours of work to fill out the papers on what we may have spent one hour doing. But that's just—that's just part of it. It is an unfavorite part of being a Homemaker.

Right. But we, it is sometimes tax money that supports what we do.

Yes, right.

What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization?

Well, a lot in 40 years. I got to thinking about that and just the way the program conducted is one of the ways it's changed. I know when we first started, I first started to club the, actually it was called Home Demonstration

Clubs back then. And the Home Demonstration Agent would usually be at every one of your monthly meetings presenting a program. Presenting a demonstration—this was, this was our, our way of . . .

Learning?

... education. I mean we didn't have TV; we didn't have all these modern communication things now, and we were all back –we all lived on the farm then. We were raising our children; we were doing farm work and—and we had this education that would just come to our community once a month and and that's great. I mean, we don't do that now, but at that time Extension Homemakers work was a big part of the Extension Service, a very large part of it. And now the Extension work is like a little dot on the screen for the Extension program. So that's one of the changes that I've seen.

Like back in 1980's, one of the changes in our club in 1980, we had a severe drought in this area and it effected us. Just all the farm women and men and our children it just—I can't tell you how many years it set us back. And we had to have a life change; our lifestyle had to change. Many of us had to go to work. I mean, we just had to have outside work in order to . . .

Survive.

... to survive, to not take bankruptcy or not to quit the lifestyle that we wanted or we were, we thought this was the lifestyle we should have. And so I know at that time that's probably when I went out and bought the restaurant so that was a big change. We always had our Homemakers meetings on a Thursday afternoon, then we tried it on nights because so many women working then. We're finally having it on Sunday afternoons. And that has proved to be very good for us as we still have our meetings now on a Sunday afternoon. And I am going to give another example of how things have changed in all these years. Three or four years ago, I know, Susan, you may remember the year, but three or four years ago, I found a cookbook that the original members or charter members of our club made. And it was made with a typewriter and it was mimeographed off and then they folded it and tied it with a string. Now, I can remember when I got married in 19[62]. Back then if we got a Betty Crocker Homemakers Cookbook, a Betty Crocker Cookbook, you know, that was a big

deal. That's like somebody giving you a Bible then when you got the Betty Crocker Cookbook. And we thought the only way we had of getting recipes then was from Mama or if Grandmother handed us down some recipes or like the women in the club we exchanged recipes.

Now then there's cookbooks everywhere, if you—you can go to the computer and type in fried chicken and you'll get 60 recipes and now we've got the cooking channel, I mean, this is one thing that has changed, I see so much. And like that day I had that little club book, the little recipe book at club, we were talking about the cooking channel and Paula Deen and how we enjoyed her. And I said I had always wanted to go Savannah, and somebody else said, yes, and I want to go, too.

And you know that was in February and in September our Homemakers Club was on a plane going to Savannah to see Paula Deen. And we went; we spent a week. It was great. We had a great time; we did sightseeing; we ate at the Paula Deen restaurant. So you see a difference in how Homemakers were like 40 years ago when the little cookbook with a string tied around it and now we just have accessible to any recipe, anything, any food and nutrition that we need.

And I can remember that when my child started to school, you know, I felt like that I had to get up and fix bacon and eggs and toast and orange juice before school because if I didn't do that I wasn't a good mother. I mean I felt like if I gave him a bowl of cereal I was really being neglectful to my son and now then we think the only thing we can really have for breakfast is a bowl of dry wholewheat cereal. So that is some of the changes that I have seen in the last 40 or 45 years that I have been a member, I could probably tell you a whole lot more, but that is just one of the things that—that I could recall.

That's a major difference between when the string was tied around there and those people probably never left the county . . .

No.

... and us getting on a plane ...

Right.

... and going to see our favorite cook.

In Savannah, Georgia.

[Laughs] Oh, that is amazing in 40 years.

Yes!

Are there any other memories or anything that you would like to share with everybody? I think there's an amazing group of Homemakers in Hindsville, Arkansas.

Yes.

And I feel very privileged to have been invited to join that group.

Yes, we are glad to have you, too.

Well, it is a great group and they do amazing work.

Yes.

To think that there are 15 ladies in Hindsville, Arkansas, that contribute so much to Madison County because they see a need, or they have a request. I mean people all over the county, agencies all over the county, say the babies in this agency need blankets and if they need them immediately, well the next week they're on it . . .

That's right.

... or if the Food Bank calls and says, our freezer is out, what can you do about it? Either if we don't have it in the treasury, we put it in the treasury or we take it out of the treasury. Or whatever is happening if somebody asks about it then that little group of 15 women get on.

Right, we do have a wonderful club. So many of us joined at the same time and we're of the same age. I mean we came from our—say 30's or 20's to upper

20's. We've been together a long time and it's—like I don't have any family, I don't have any brothers or sisters, and we are a very tight-knit community and the women in the club are just really like my sisters—not only my close friends, but club is like my family.

And that's another wonderful thing about it because if anybody needs anything, all they have to do is say so.

Right.

But it is a really—that's been my experience. And I've been blessed to see that in more than one county right, and it's not unique just to this group.

No.

And that's a real wonderful thing about the Extension Homemakers all over, is that it's repeated from group to group —is that Extension Homemakers are— that's a common thing with each group. Well, I want to thank you for all your contributions to Extension Homemakers and ...

I have one more thing . . .

Well, good I'll be glad to hear . . .

... one more thing I want to share. I know back early that in Extension work that the 4-H program was the main project of the Homemakers. I mean we were there to support and be leaders of the 4-H Club in our community. And I have seen that go by the wayside. I don't see as much help from the Extension Homemakers Clubs like we used to do. I mean, we knew that our children were our first priorities—that's just kind of been passed away. But I knew when, one experience and—I think that I got all this knowledge and all these work ethics and moral, values through the Extension, through being a club member. But my son, I was a 4-H leader; he became a member when he was 10 years old. And he had a beef project. You know we run a lot of cattle, had a big farm so he was into beef and he built up quite a herd. And he was an excellent, excellent, showmanship. I mean that was his passion. After all the many years that he was in showmanship, I think he only lost one contest, which that was a

heart breaker.

Yes, it always is.

Anyway, in 1986 he got the State 4-H Beef Project Award. And that was a highlight of our life.

Yes.

It was just wonderful and I just know that all the help I gave him and all the things I do came through the Extension work.

That . . .

I'm shedding tears, Susan.

Well, it brings back so many good memories and there are a lot of families that can say that with their children. And I've seen it in so many instances and I've seen a lot of children that will stand right up and say everything that I—all my leadership abilities have come through 4-H.

Yes, yes.

And 4-H is still the net for a lot of children.

It is just in different ways than we are used to.

Right.

Four-H is still a great, great program. My husband and I are both 4-H Alumni members. And my husband was a State 4-H winner in Forestry, I believe it was. And we are both members of the State Alumni Association. We still support the county.

Earlton and I do, too. We are very, very appreciative of what 4-H can do for the youth of our country.

And there is something else that I want to say about—I left this out in some question—that our original club, our charter members. Right now we still have a daughter of a charter member and a granddaughter of a charter member, a daughter-in-law and a granddaughter of a charter member.

Wow.

So that's something else that you know that's good that you have a program that's so good that we are following the lines down.

Oh, absolutely. That says a whole lot for our program because many programs do not do that. Well, there's a great strength in the program that Extension has to offer to every community in the United States.

Right.

Well, we want to thank you for your contributions to the Extension Homemakers and for sharing your time and memories with us, as well as to the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council and to the Pryor Center for the Arkansas Oral and Visual History. And we are going to provide you with a copy of this and for you to have so you can share it with your family and with other people and with the Hindsville Whitener Club.

Well, I just wanted to say thanks to you. I think it was an honor or a privilege to be chosen to do this interview even though I kind of worried about. [SS: Laughs] But you know, I've got to get busy. We're celebrating our 100th Anniversary.

Yes, we are.

Our club's going to dress in period style clothing. Hopefully we're going to do a little notebook collections so that someone one hundred years from now will know what we are doing.

That is correct.

Thank you, Susan.

You're welcome. Thank you, Pat.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.