



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

March 22, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORS

FROM: 
SARAH J. BONILLA, DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: POLICY GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #21
FAMILY MEMBERS

The Department of Energy has maintained a broad definition for a family member to include “any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship”. This is part of the definition for a family member that is located on page 7 of the DOE Handbook on Leave and Absence. We believe that it is consistent with the current administration’s efforts to extend services and benefits to same-sex partners (see the President’s June 2, 2010, memorandum at www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-extension-benefits-same-sex-domestic-partners-federal-emplo and the OPM memorandum also dated June 2, 2010, at <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=2982>). To clarify this point, when the handbook is updated, “same-sex partner” will be added to the list of examples. In addition, any other reference to a family member, such as in DOE O 341.1, Federal Employee Health Services, at paragraph 4c(1)(d) and in the DOE Handbook on Overseas Assignments, should be treated the same way.

For questions or comments on this issue, contact Bruce Murray at bruce.murray@hq.doe.gov.

