



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

Equity Action Plan

(July 2023)



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Message From the Under Secretary



Under Secretary Robert Bonnie

The central aim of USDA’s Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area is to support **all** American agricultural producers by providing financing, risk management tools, disaster aid, conservation assistance and a range of other services. The doors to every USDA county service center and every office must be open to everyone. The FPAC Business Center, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency have all adopted Equity Action Plans that detail key actions and initiatives to improve FPAC for our existing customers while ensuring our agencies are welcoming and accessible to future customers as well. These Agency plans describe specific steps we are taking to eliminate historic barriers to our programs, to improve program implementation, and to help farmers and ranchers grow and improve their agricultural operations.

We recognize that agriculture is composed of a diversity of crops, farm and ranch sizes, production systems, locations, individuals, and families—and that our efforts to support farmers, ranchers, and forest owners must consider and reflect that diversity. Implementation of these Equity Action Plans will guide each FPAC agency as we strive to serve all producers and foster a more prosperous, resilient, and sustainable agricultural economy.

– Robert Bonnie
Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation

Message From the Farm Service Agency Administrator

Programmatic equity means embracing the varied needs of the producers we serve. FSA stands committed to addressing those needs to allow all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers opportunities to thrive.



“FSA is continually evaluating how we can deliver our programs in a manner that is meaningful to the farmers and ranchers we serve. We are dedicated to improving customer service and to building equity into the fabric of our work as an agency.”

This critical work requires FSA to meaningfully engage with all the farmers, ranchers, and producers we serve and could serve, along with our partners and cooperators, as we work to deliver conservation, safety net, price support, and farm loan programs across our network of state and county offices.

Understanding that each of us has unique talents and abilities that can contribute to the success of the Farm Service Agency, we believe that those impacted by decisions and programs should be engaged in the process. Our agency is taking steps to ensure everyone is included and respected when our programs are designed and implemented. We invite you to join us in this journey, and to continue to be a part of our efforts as we march forward in advancing equity at the Farm Service Agency.

The Farm Service Agency Equity Action Plan highlights high-leverage actions with the potential to create significant and long-term systemic change that benefits employees, Tribes, partners, and most importantly the broader American public.

*– Zach Ducheneaux
FSA Administrator*

Introduction

FSA’s overall equity goal is to ensure agricultural resources and assistance are broadly accessible, while creating new, more, and better market opportunities, so our policies and programs advance agriculture for the “many and most.” In

accordance with Executive Order 13985 “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government,” and Executive Order 14091, “Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,” the Farm Service Agency is committed to proactively adopting policies and practices to reduce inequities in the conservation, safety net, price support and farm loan programs delivered across our network of state and county offices.

FSA is committed to advance equity by focusing on actions that will result in:

- Increased trust with producers, including currently and historically underserved producers
- Improved customer service to underserved farming communities
- Reduced program barriers
- Program and funding opportunities to address systemic inequities

FSA is developing external-facing efforts to empower all communities of producers and is building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce to match the diverse farming population in the urban and rural communities that we serve.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) established an Equity Commission for USDA. This 15-member independent commission is charged with evaluating USDA programs and services and recommending how our agencies can reduce barriers for accessing them. Earlier this year, the commission issued 31 [interim recommendations](#). Many items in this equity action plan align with those recommendations; this is noted where applicable.



“By advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity, the Farm Service Agency can harness the power of diverse perspectives and experiences to drive innovation and growth, while creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.”

Accomplishments

Ensuring Equitable Pandemic Assistance

Under the previous administration's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), only 4 percent of funding went to socially disadvantaged farmers (among those who identified their race and/or ethnicity). After identifying gaps in previous COVID-19 relief funding, USDA announced Pandemic Assistance for Producers, an initiative committed to distributing and directing resources more equitably, especially to the people and sectors who need assistance the most. Among other funding opportunities, the Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative included re-opening signup for CFAP2, and \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers who have historically faced barriers in accessing this type of FSA assistance. CFAP2 saw an approximately 21 percentage point increase of CFAP enrollment applications from socially disadvantaged producers. In addition, and most recently, FSA made automatic Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) top-up payments to underserved producers.

Assisting Financially Distressed Borrowers

Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act gives FSA \$3.1 billion to help distressed farm loan borrowers. Since the IRA was signed by President Biden in August 2022, USDA has provided over \$1 billion in assistance to more than 20,000 distressed borrowers, and counting, to distressed farm loan borrowers to help cure delinquencies, resolve uncollectable farm loan debts, and keep farmers farming. Borrowers who received immediate automatic payments in October 2022 include FSA direct and guaranteed loan borrowers who had a balance of 60 or more days past due as of Sept. 30, 2022. Automatic payments in March 2023 included direct loan borrowers whose interest exceeded principle owed on outstanding debts; borrowers who became 60 days delinquent between September 30, 2022, and October 18, 2022, and remained delinquent; and borrowers with a recent restructure between February 28, 2020, and March 27, 2023, or who had accepted an offer to restructure on or before March 27, 2023, but had not yet closed that restructure. FSA also announced new processes for borrowers to request individual, case-by-case assistance and support from the FSA.

Simplified Direct Farm Loan Application Process

Approximately 26,000 producers submit a direct loan application to FSA annually, but there is a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. In response, FSA implemented a simplified direct farm loan application process in February 2023, drastically reducing the burden and time spent on its forms. The agency has also rolled out a loan assistance tool that helps farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process.

Increasing Access to Non-Disaster Crop Assistance Program (NAP)

FSA has long heard about the challenges underserved farmers have faced in navigating the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). In January 2023, FSA announced program updates that reduce the paperwork burden on these producers to access free basic NAP coverage with a NAP service-fee waiver. Specifically, FSA designated Form CCC-860 to serve as an application for basic 50/55 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage beginning with the 2022 crop year, which provides free basic NAP coverage and waives the NAP service fee for producers who have certified as a socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning or veteran farmer or rancher.

Promoting Urban Agriculture

Historically, the lack of USDA's presence in urban and suburban areas and the absence of USDA farm programs that are aligned with the needs of urban and suburban agricultural producers have been barriers to access. In response, the Farm Service Agency is piloting urban agriculture county committees in 17 locations to have a voice in programs that support urban producers.

Access for Indian Country

FSA made substantial changes to address barriers and inequities in Indian Country through updating the Livestock Indemnity Program's 2022 payment rates to (1) recognize tribal traditional animals and better reflect true market value of non-adult beef, beefalo, bison, and dairy animals; (2) update several livestock programs to include horses not intended to be used for racing and wagering, allowing participation by eligible tribal ranchers who use forage to raise their horses; and (3) modify the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and signing historic new agreements with three tribal nations in the Great Plains that will help enroll eligible agricultural land that lies within reservation boundaries. In November 2022, the Farm Service Agency also announced new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) partnerships with three tribal nations in the Great Plains, covering 3.1 million acres, to help conserve, maintain, and improve grassland productivity, reduce soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. These are the first-ever CREP agreements with tribal nations.

Facilitating Wide Participation in FSA County Committees

Working to ensure diverse representation on FSA's County Committees, the Secretary has exercised his authority to appoint 93 socially disadvantaged voting members to committees lacking such representation.

In addition, many producers, advisory groups and the equity commission have recommended that FSA ensures that producers have access to county maps, increasing the potential for underserved producers to effectively participate in FSA's County Committee nominations and elections process. FSA has published a new [GIS Locator Tool](#) to solve this problem.

Helping Farmers Solve Succession Issues

USDA has provided \$67 million in competitive loans through its new Heirs' Property Relending Program. The program, launched in July 2021, allows intermediary lenders to help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs' land ownership and succession issues. Heirs' property and other land tenure issues have long been substantial barriers preventing access to USDA programs for many producers and landowners, and this relending program provides access to capital to help producers find a resolution. The program's benefits go far beyond its participants. It will keep farmland in farming, protect family farm legacies, and support economic viability.

Outreach and Technical Assistance for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.

The Farm Service Agency leads the Department's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. To increase support for young and beginning farmers, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinators have been identified from State Office staff of the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service,

Rural Development, and Risk Management Agency. These coordinators are leading development and implementation of beginning farmer education, outreach, and technical assistance plans for their states, including outreach to small, minority, and specialty crop producers as well as non-profits and other service providers. They are supported by the USDA National Beginning Farmer Coordinator and FSA Outreach Office staff.

Improving Safe, Healthy Work Environments for Farmworkers

In coordination with other Federal agencies, in June 2022, USDA announced a pilot program using up to \$65 million in American Rescue Plan funding to provide support for agricultural employers in implementing robust health and safety standards to promote a safe, healthy work environment for both U.S. workers and workers hired from Northern Central American countries under the seasonal H-2A visa program. FSA conducted three listening sessions in September 2022 to receive input from agricultural employer organizations, labor unions, farmworker advocates, farmworkers, and other relevant stakeholders, as it works to develop and implement this pilot program.

Engaging Stakeholder Feedback.

In FY 2023, the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area distributed two nationwide surveys that impact Farm Service Agency operations: (1) Farm Service Agency Farm Loans Customer Feedback Survey, (2) FPAC Prospective Customer Survey focusing on gaining a better understanding of farmers, ranchers and forest managers who have not previously worked with FPAC agencies. The surveys were translated into 13 languages and made available for online completion. FPAC is also actively seeking feedback through interactive buttons on the farmers.gov and FSA public-facing websites. Analytics of the survey results over time will provide insights into customer reactions to policy and operational changes, the simplified direct loan applications, and automation improvements.

Equity Actions

The Farm Service Agency is pursuing 10 Actions for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2023-24 with supporting tasks and activities listed below as anticipated milestones. Each of our actions follows one or more of five strategies:

- Aligning farm lending and farm programs with USDA priorities and values.
- Removing hurdles and tailoring programs to all types of producers, production, and business models.
- Creating new, more, and better market opportunities for producers.
- Targeting direct assistance and technical support based on degree of need.
- Institutionalizing access for broader stakeholder viewpoints.

Our first four actions deal with **farm loan programs**. FSA is well underway in its journey to modify and improve farm loan programs, enhancing and creating loan servicing and loan-making tools that are more flexible and more proactive. Our overarching imperative, which will require leveraging all our tools, is the goal of “keeping farmers farming” —helping producers be in a position to take advantage of opportunities and build financial equity.

Action 1: [Improve access to credit and lending processes based on feedback from beginning farmers, commercial lending partners, and other stakeholders.](#)

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendation #6

Overall, the goals here are to streamline and adjust FSA loan processes to reduce burdens on producers, field staff and lending partners; ensure loan programs meet the needs of producers; and reduce barriers to participation.

Milestone 1: Modernize FSA paperwork process. Standardize collected information and reduce duplicative paperwork.

Milestone 2: Develop online loan tools to streamline processes, promote transparency and improve business processes.

Milestone 3: Examine loan processes and use plain language to clearly describe eligibility criteria in loan programs.

Milestone 4: Explore ways to increase farm loan participation and reduce barriers that result from family farm size, farm business structure, and experience requirements.

Milestone 5: Collaborate with AMS and other USDA agencies to expand commodity pricing data used for farm loan application processing. Expansion of this pricing data source can potentially assist in higher valued price per yield for farming operations.

Milestone 6: Provide additional flexibility in loan processing and servicing times. Accept preliminary paperwork or offer initial eligibility statement.

Milestone 7: Improve timing and reduce delays in FSA loan title work and appraisals.

Milestone 8: Improve consistency in loan experience among FSA county offices.

Milestone 9: Improve Preferred Lender Program and explore additional flexibilities that could be made available to participating lenders.

Milestone 10: Develop pilots and agreements to test and support lending process enhancements.

Action 2: Provide additional support for new and beginning farmers, improving their access to FSA farm loan programs.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendations #6

Milestone 1: Review feedback from stakeholders and lenders to make administrative improvements that improve access to credit for beginning farmers in direct and guaranteed loan programs.

Milestone 2: Collaborate with USDA agencies to identify gaps between FSA loans and USDA grant programs to ensure new programs (such as the Increasing Land Access & Market Program) are addressing the needs of underserved farmers.

Milestone 3: Ensure farm loan officers have the necessary training to serve beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs).

Milestone 4: Explore pilots and cooperative agreements to test and support any proposed BFR process enhancements.

Action 3: Continue to implement distressed borrower payments under Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which provides assistance for distressed borrowers.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendations #6

Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act includes \$3.1 billion to help distressed farm loan borrowers. Automatic payments were made in March 2023 to direct loan borrowers whose interest exceeded principle owed on outstanding debts; borrowers who became 60 days delinquent between September 30, 2022, and October 18, 2022, and remained delinquent; and borrowers with a recent restructure between February 28, 2020, through March 27, 2023, or who had accepted an offer to restructure on or before March 27, 2023, but had not yet closed that restructure. New processes for borrowers to request individual, case-by-case assistance and support from the FSA have been announced.

Milestone 1: FSA will develop and implement an outreach and communications campaign to inform borrowers of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 22006 payment process. FSA will also collaborate with community-based organizations and universities on outreach, technical assistance, and opportunities to provide borrowers with access to financial and tax planning services.

Milestone 2: FSA will administer a process to evaluate the cases of borrowers who took extraordinary measures to avoid delinquency but are still in need of assistance. If a borrower meets the criteria for this assistance, FSA will issue a payment to the borrower based on their specific circumstances.

Milestone 3: FSA will administer a process to assist financially distressed direct farm loan borrowers by making a one-time installment payment to direct borrowers who may be unable to make their next installment.

Action 4: Implement approved recommendations made by FSA Farm Loan Program Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) Reboot Task Force Report.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendation #13



Milestone 1: Implement internal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access (DEIA) training, dialogue, and other tools to engage FSA workforce to improve customer service.

Milestone 2: Integrate coordinated FSA stakeholder engagement, diversity outreach and customer feedback as standard practices in process improvement and program delivery based on FSA’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Reboot (DEIA-R) report.

Our next four equity actions focus on **improvements to non-loan programs that ensure barriers to access are low, and that outreach is broad.** FSA has identified new, holistic approaches to provide economic support to producers in the wake of disasters. Through FSA’s implementation of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase 2 and the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP), FSA is accommodating and including a more diverse set of producers by considering their overall revenue losses when determining program eligibility. FSA is also investing in cooperative agreements to ensure producers who are new to FSA have the support and tools they need to submit applications for these critical programs.

Action 5: Implement farm program and policy changes to ensure FSA programs meet the needs of all producers.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendations #3, #7

Milestone 1: Increase Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) enrollment and usefulness by:

- *Expand direct, local, and other value-added marketing prices within NAP or allow farmers to use their own yields and historic pricing data.*
- *Use acreage reporting data to conduct targeted outreach to eligible producers (primarily small specialty crop producers).*
- *Further simplifying NAP, build on application and reporting streamlining to provide automatic basic coverage for appropriate producers.*

Milestone 2: Modernize base acre policies to address producers' inability to receive necessary program payments that help stabilize on-farm revenue during economic downturns with commodity markets.

Milestone 3: Adjust Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice standards to better integrate and equitably compensate for the use of Indigenous land management practices.

Milestone 4: Streamline and target ad-hoc natural disaster assistance through the Emergency Relief Program 2 (ERP 2). This includes simplified pre-filled applications for producers with crop insurance or NAP coverage, and whole-farm revenue approach operations without risk management coverage such as value-added, diversified operations.

Milestone 5: To address gaps in previous pandemic assistance, accept applications and issue payments for Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) for producers that target overall revenue losses and support producers with eligible commodities who were not previously eligible for pandemic assistance.

Milestone 6: Provide cost share assistance for organic practices that support soil health, biodiversity and reduce erosion through the Organic Cost Certification Specialty Crop program.

Milestone 7: Transform marketing opportunities for small and medium producers by implementing the food safety certification for a specialty crops program (FSCSC) that supports a more equitable ag economy.

Milestone 8: Address unique marketing costs challenges faced by dairy operators through implementing the Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) for certified dairy operations.

Milestone 9: Increase staff knowledge of farmer and rancher profiles to better match relevant services and programs with USDA customers and potential customers. (Training on programs available for beginning, urban, tribal, historically underserved, specialty crop producers, etc.)

Milestone 10: Review FSA programs for additional regulatory/administrative changes that will improve processes for beginning farmers and ranchers and historically underserved producers.

Action 6: Improve outreach, engagement, and service to producers by reducing barriers to accessing programs and training FSA employees in serving tribal and underserved customers.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendations #4 and 13

Milestone 1: The FSA Outreach Office (OO) will design a flexible suite of interventions to support FSA staff in more effectively conducting outreach and helping tribal producers access the services, loans, and programs they need.

Milestone 2: The FSA Outreach Office will work with Farm Loan Programs (FLP) staff to reduce barriers to tribal producer participation. OO will work with the FLP and customer experience (C/X) offices to improve online resources and access to information for tribal producers and other underserved customers.

Milestone 3: Implement Customer experience (C/X) tested solutions from recent C/X project working with tribal producers with all FSA customers and field employees.

Milestone 4: Require diversity training related to working with underserved groups and issues to staff.

Milestone 5: Monitor and assess all targeted outreach activities conducted and reported by each FSA state and county office quarterly.

Milestone 6: Reduce producer barriers by increasing technical assistance cooperative agreements for community-based organizations (CBOs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) that work with specialty crop producers, beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers.

Action 7: Expand opportunities for heirs and tribal producers impacted by heirs' property and fractionated land issues by improving the Heirs' Property Relending Program and Highly Fractionated Indian Land Program.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendations #1 and 2



The Heirs' Property Relending Program (HPRP) and the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Program (HIFL) allow opportunities for heirs' property descendants and tribal members to obtain loans to resolve title issues and/or purchase fractionated land interests through intermediary lenders. As fractionation and heir issues increase, a producer's ability to use the land decreases. Resolution of heirs and fractionated land provides opportunities for wealth creation and an asset to leverage for credit, builds food sovereignty by putting farmland into production, and expands economic development in communities.

Milestone 1: Engage with Indigenous Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) and other interested entities in ensuring that heirship issues also address fractionation issues that tribal communities face.

Milestone 2: Evaluate regulatory and procedural changes for HIFL Program.

Milestone 3: Align HIFL Program with HPRP.

Milestone 4: Provide cooperative agreements for community based nonprofit organizations to address and resolve fractionated land issues and heirs' property issues for underserved producers through the delivery of legal technical assistance, education, and drafting estate plans.

Milestone 5: Promote availability of direct family loans that can be used to close heirs' property estates and legal costs.

Milestone 6: Provide cooperative agreements to 501c3 organizations (with minimum 5 years' experience delivering legal services to indigent persons) to deliver legal technical assistance and education that will prevent the creation of heir's property and remedy title issue which caused heirs' property and fractionated land.

Milestone 7: Conduct cross training of staff and stakeholders to promote the HIFL program, its goals, and ease of use.

Action 8: Identify program gaps through the evaluation of covered Justice 40 programs to ensure the agency is reaching the broadest audience.

Milestone: Track and report completion of actions for FSA Justice 40 covered programs using metrics and benefits methodologies created to increase benefits disadvantaged communities, using the Climate & Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). (The Justice 40 Initiative is a federal government-wide effort, covering selected programs, to deliver at least 40 percent of the benefits of those programs to identified disadvantaged communities).

The final three actions **expand FSA's reach to all producers** by leveraging partnerships with trusted technical assistance institutions and organizations and modernizing and institutionalizing improved County Committees.

Action 9: Provide Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 cooperative agreements that are targeted towards providing education to underserved producers on risk management strategies such as financial management and recordkeeping as well as climate, urban ag and local foods.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendation #4

Milestone 1: Partner with public and private organizations to deliver risk management education and training to underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Milestone 2: Provide funding opportunities to eligible universities, Minority Service Institutions, community-based organizations in every state for projects that address Mission Area priorities. Staff at national and state level will be substantially involved in all partnerships.

Action 10: Reimagine FSA County Committees, currently an underutilized outreach, education, and technical assistance resource.

This action and milestones align with the USDA Equity Commission Recommendation #8

FSA will prioritize and enhance the role of County Committees (COCs) in conducting local outreach and education and providing technical assistance and mentorship to producers in their communities, in conjunction with agricultural extension specialists, cooperators, and other partners. Instead of reviewing farm program applications for errors or fraud detection, COCs will focus on engagement with local producers to increase awareness and enrollment in FSA programs. This pivot will allow FSA to invest in dedicated FSA staff with relevant subject matter expertise to guide accountability measures such as spot checks and programmatic audits. COCs can, in turn, raise issues of need in the community, engage with local producers, and work with county offices to improve program access. With their more intended focus on conducting and providing outreach, education, and technical assistance, COCs will be guided to

pay special attention to new, beginning, and underserved producers—who, as new customers to FSA, may need assistance understanding and accessing FSA programs and services.



Milestone 1: Prioritize and enhance the COCs' role in conducting local outreach and education and providing technical assistance and mentorship to producers in their communities, in conjunction with agricultural extension specialists, cooperators, and other partners, with an elevated focus on conducting and providing outreach, education, and technical assistance. COCs should also pay special attention to new, beginning, and underserved producers—who, as new customers to FSA, may need assistance understanding and accessing FSA programs and services.

Milestone 2: Develop targeted outreach strategies to provide awareness and eligibility of tribal members for county committees.

Milestone 3: Establish a USDA COC Liaison responsible for identifying and instituting diverse representation on COCs.

Milestone 4: Increase transparency and accountability for COCs by establishing a performance metric with controls/mechanisms to ensure equitable standards. County Executive Director (CED) & COC members should be subject to oversight/evaluation by FSA w/civil rights, equity and demographic factors included as metrics.

Milestone 5: Conduct a biannual assessment on performance measures that indicate equitable outcomes for COCs. If it does not yield equitable outcomes, an external analysis/study on equity disparities & potential reform shall be conducted on the equity disparities of COCs and a potential reform of the COC system to be more equitable for all farmers. The analysis should include the historic and current role of COCs creating disparities for and displacement of women and underserved farmers.

Milestone 6: Require diversity training related to working with underserved groups and issues to staff and new committee members. Members should also be trained on the role of the minority advisor and FSA appeals processes.

Milestone 7: FSA will expand and institutionalize urban committees in identified areas, ensuring that urban producers' needs and situations are included in program design, implementation, and outreach.

For more information on equity at FSA, and all of USDA, see usda.gov/equity.

Selected Equity Resources and Information

USDA Equity-Related Summary Reports and Guidance

- Programmatic Equity at USDA:
 - [Equity Website](#)
 - [Equity Accomplishments](#)
 - Equity Action Plan: [Full Plan | Summary](#) (February 2022)
- Equity Commission
 - [Equity Commission Website](#)
 - [2023 Interim Report | USDA Response \(English\)](#) (February 2023)
 - [Informe Interino 2023 | Respuesta al Informe Interino de la Comisión de Equidad del USDA | \(En Español\)](#) (Febrero 2023)
- [USDA Environmental Justice Scorecard](#)
- [USDA Advisory Committees](#)

Selected Farm Service Agency Resources

- [Farm Service Agency Website](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Office Locator](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Climate Adaptation Plan](#)
- [Farm Service Agency Cooperative Agreements](#)
- [Farm Service Agency County Committees and Urban County Committees](#)
- [Farm Loan Program Data](#)
- [Disaster Assistance Tool](#)
- [Get Started! A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers \(July 2022\) \(PDF, 2 MB\)](#)
- [Loan Assistance Tool](#)
- [Translated Farm Service Agency Program Fact Sheets](#)
- [USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Resources](#)
- [USDA Certified Mediation Program](#)
- [What is Receipt for Service?](#)

Selected Equity-Related Executive Orders and White House Resources

- [White House Equity Page](#)
- [Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) (January 2021)
- [Executive Order 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) (February 2023)
- [Executive Order 14096, Revitalizing our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All](#) (April 2023)
- [Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments](#) (November 2000)
- [Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)
- [The Path to Achieving Justice⁴⁰](#)

USDA Mission Statement

“To serve all Americans by providing effective, innovative, science-based public policy leadership in agriculture, food and nutrition, natural resource protection and management, rural development, and related issues with a commitment to delivering equitable and climate-smart opportunities that inspire and help America thrive.”

Department Equity Action Plan Strategies

1. Reducing Barriers to USDA Programs

USDA is reducing barriers to programs and improving support to underserved farmers, ranchers, landowners, businesses, and communities, including by providing ways for stakeholders to share their experiences, insights, and needs and by incorporating that input into policy development and implementation improvement.

2. Partnering with Trusted Technical Assistance Providers

USDA is partnering with trusted technical assistance providers to ensure that underserved producers and communities have the support they need to access USDA programs.

3. Directing USDA Programs to Those Who Need Them the Most

USDA programs are targeting those who need them the most, including by increasing infrastructure investments that benefit underserved communities.

4. Expanding Equitable Access to USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs

USDA is expanding equitable access to USDA nutrition assistance programs to ensure that those who qualify are able to participate, those who participate get benefits that are meaningful, and those who receive those benefits can use them conveniently and in ways that promote improvements in their health and well-being.

5. Advancing Equity in Federal Procurement

USDA is advancing equity in Federal procurement, by providing underserved and disadvantaged businesses, tools and resources to increase access to funding opportunities and expand their network to develop critical local, State, regional, and National relationships.

6. Upholding Federal Trust and Treaty Responsibilities to Indian Tribes

USDA is upholding general Federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Indian Tribes, removing barriers to access USDA programs, embracing Tribal self-determination principles, and incorporating indigenous values and perspectives in program design and delivery.

7. Committing Unwaveringly to Civil Rights

USDA has committed unwaveringly to civil rights, working to equip its civil rights offices with the tools, skills, capacity, and processes essential to enforce and uphold civil rights effectively and efficiently.

8. Operating with Transparency and Accountability

USDA is operating transparently and accountably, providing information on Department programs that Congress, stakeholders, and the general public need to hold us to account on our equity agenda, and working systematically to collect and take account of public feedback.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.