



Research, Education, and Economics
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS MISSION AREA

EQUITY ACTION PLAN (JULY 2023)



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About the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Mission Area

USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area is dedicated to creating a more sustainable, innovative, competitive, and equitable U.S. agrifood system while also building stronger communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education. This mission is carried out through five organizations—the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS).

REE works hard to ensure fairness, integrity, and accessibility in all the work that we do. We apply an equity lens when designing our research, programs, trainings, outreach, and partnerships. Our goal is to recognize and unlock the talents of employees of all backgrounds to ensure our science and data are inclusive of and accessible to all Americans. Equitable access to science-based, data-driven information and new technologies underpins USDA's mission and priorities in support of the American people.

REE's ongoing commitment to enhancing equity stretches across all aspects of our mission. In line with the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities and the guidance of Secretary Vilsack, this Equity Action Plan outlines how we will further our progress in service to the public and our stakeholders. This plan identifies several priorities and cascading actions to pursue in FY 2023 and beyond across each of our five organizations. Its actions build on considerable progress made thus far and respond directly to the priorities outlined in [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*.

In May 2023, REE released the "[USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023-2026: Cultivating Scientific Innovation](#)" (S&RS), a near-term vision for transforming U.S. agriculture through science and innovation, which outlines USDA's highest scientific priorities. The S&RS is also our answer to how we can strengthen our research, development, and deployment partnerships to ensure the nation's food system is more sustainable, resilient, and profitable for the many and the most, instead of just the few. USDA's five science priorities include: Accelerating Innovative Technologies & Practices, Driving Climate-Smart Solutions, Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health, Cultivating Resilient Ecosystems, and Translating Research into Action.

The S&RS aligns with [USDA's Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026](#) and reflects input from across USDA's stakeholders and partners. Working together with our diverse partners and communities, we can push the boundaries of possibility to beat the climate crisis, tackle nutrition insecurity, build vibrant ecosystems, and create a more equitable food future for all.

REE release of the S&RS and the inclusion of key components within the USDA Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 manifests our ability to be open and helps establish trust, the foundation for relationship building. We value building and expanding relationships across the research, education, and Extension communities and seek to listen to and understand the needs of the people impacted by our research and data. We proactively seek partnerships that will generate positive outcomes across all communities, particularly those who have been underserved or unserved by USDA in the past. We are committed to

strengthening the public’s confidence in—and understanding of—USDA science and working in a manner that is deserving of their trust.

As part of our programmatic focus, our science priorities include delivering science-based information to support nutrition security, personalized and culturally appropriate food choices, and food accessibility and affordability to traditionally underserved groups, while continuing to innovate new solutions. To drive the greatest impact, USDA science and research must respond to the needs of the diverse customers we serve, must be accessible to all, and must be translated into action in communities across the nation.

Message from the USDA Chief Scientist and REE Under Secretary

In my time leading REE and in my 20 years of federal service, I have had the opportunity to travel across the country and meet with many of the people REE serves. They are optimistic about the future of agriculture, and so am I. Robust and ambitious research and education helps USDA meet and expand our commitment to farmers and ranchers as they work to feed the world.



*Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young,
USDA Chief Scientist and REE
Under Secretary*

*By advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity, REE
will harness the power of diverse perspectives
and experiences to drive innovation and growth,
while creating a more inclusive and equitable
environment for all.*

But to be effective, both research and education must address all American communities—and must rely, inspire, and nurture diverse talent. The REE Equity Action Plan includes a comprehensive set of high-leverage actions with the potential to create significant and long-term systemic change that benefits employees, Tribes, partners, and strives to reach the broader American public.

REE continues to make strides to advance equity and accessibility through various avenues including increasing science and data transparency, building partners’ capacity, and strengthening existing and building new partnerships with underserved groups. We look forward to addressing the equity actions as outlined in our plan below.

REE’s Equity Action Plan builds on several internal efforts underway across the mission area, ranging from strengthening and diversifying USDA’s scientific workforce to adapting our processes and procurement to reflect the breadth of America. This plan focuses specifically on programmatic efforts to meaningfully expand our engagement, programs, and services to reach stakeholders and communities that have often been overlooked and underserved so that we can more effectively and impactfully deliver on our mission.

– Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young,
USDA Chief Scientist and REE Under Secretary

Equity Accomplishments

Building Capacity at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

Under the leadership of Secretary Vilsack, REE and USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagements convened a series of listening sessions in 2021-2022 with leaders from Hispanic-serving, 1890, 1994, and 1862 institutions. Conversations centered on how USDA can meaningfully enhance its partnerships with Minority-Serving Institutions and Tribal partners to catalyze research to support historically underserved groups and improve access to USDA services.

REE heard from MSI leaders about the need for increased investment in MSIs to enlarge students' access to curriculum, internships, and training that expand career opportunities in USDA-related fields, and to leverage the ability to provide technical assistance to help underserved and veteran farmers to own and operate successful agricultural businesses.

In 2022, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) [invested](#) \$14 million in six new Centers of Excellence at 1890 Land-grant Universities (designated Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Funding for these collaborative research centers focused on subjects ranging from rural prosperity and climate-smart technology to food security, health, and nutrition. These investments are strengthening research, workforce development and extension programs that support underserved producers and communities.

In the same year, NIFA awarded an additional \$302 million to MSIs: \$275 million in investments in 1890 institutions, \$19 million to Hispanic-Serving institutions, and \$8.3 million to 1994 Land-grant Tribal Colleges. In FY 2023, NIFA has invested approximately \$348 million in MSIs to-date. Funding totals include American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments that build capacity for teaching, research, and extension activities critical to USDA and USDA partners' efforts to prepare students for careers in food, agriculture, and natural resources sciences.

Investing in Technical Assistance Cooperators to Expand USDA's Reach

Underserved farmers and ranchers have historically lacked equitable access to knowledge and information that aid in accessing and navigating USDA programs. REE is addressing this issue by ensuring that underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters have the tools, programs and support they need to succeed in agriculture. Since FY 2022, we have invested more than \$100 million in over 30 organizations that provide [technical assistance](#) by connecting underserved producers with USDA programs and services. This funding, made possible by ARPA, builds the capacity of these cooperator organizations to provide targeted and tailored support for producers to increase land access, develop sound business plans, expand markets and revenues, and unlock access to capital.

Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse U.S. Agricultural Professionals

In June 2023, USDA announced the recipients of a \$262.5 million investment in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. The *From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals* (called "NextGen") program is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to lower

costs for American families, expand access to markets to producers from all backgrounds and communities, build a clean energy economy and strengthen American supply chains.

The NextGen program, administered by NIFA, is part of USDA's commitment to advancing equity across the Department and builds on steps taken under Secretary Vilsack's direction to improve equity and access, eliminate barriers to its programs and services, and build a workforce more representative of America. This historic investment in our nation's Minority-serving Institutions will provide training and support to more than 20,000 future food and agricultural leaders through 33 project partners.

REE is also proud of several additional actions taken to accelerate equitable positive youth development and workforce training during the Biden-Harris Administration:

- In November 2022, ERS announced a new partnership with the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association to increase diversity in the field of agricultural economics. This effort will expand the number of students from underrepresented groups who pursue advanced degrees and careers in agricultural economics, supporting a new generation of skilled professionals more representative of today's society.
- ERS strengthened its a long-standing partnership with the Farm Foundation to support the annual Ag Scholars Program. In FY 2022, ERS expanded the program to host three Ag Scholars (out of 15 total) from 1890s institutions. These scholars were seamlessly incorporated into the existing program and ERS added an additional 1890s-based Ag Scholar in FY 2023.
- With funding provided by ARPA, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and NIFA partnered to conduct Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) workforce development projects. NIFA seized the opportunity to leverage its 1890s and 1994s network to support FNS in strengthening the diversity and cultural competency of the WIC workforce. In April 2023, USDA launched a \$750,000 Request for Application (RFA) to fund the development a multifaceted five-year national WIC workforce strategy that will recruit and train WIC employees to best serve WIC families. Awards are expected to be announced in summer 2023.
- NIFA hosts the annual National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C. In 2022 and 2023, NIFA for the first time in the Conference's more than 95-year history, provided scholarships to ensure participation from 1890s, 1994s, and Hispanic-serving Institutions to significantly increase minority youth representation in the conference experience.
- ARS scientists in Mandan, North Dakota, recently hosted a Tribal College Field Day for students, which included tips on applying for federal jobs and resume development, information about 1994 Land-grant Tribal Colleges Scholarship opportunities, opportunities to get feedback on student research projects, and a field tour of ARS facilities.

[Advancing Precision Nutrition Research and Translation in Underserved and At-Risk Communities](#)

In December 2022, REE launched the Agricultural Science Center of Excellence for Nutrition and Diet (ASCEND) for Better Health in support of President Biden's Cancer Moonshot initiative and the White House National Strategy on Hunger Nutrition and Health. ASCEND is accelerating research on diet-related chronic diseases, including cancer. A long-term goal of the center is to translate research into impactful solutions that improve public health and wellbeing, particularly in underserved communities.

In January 2023, REE co-hosted a community engagement session with members of the local African American community in partnership with Southern University (an 1890 Land-grant). Over 120 members of the local community participated in a four-hour workshop designed to maximize community members' participation and sharing of feedback and personal diet-related health stories.

REE co-hosted a second community engagement session in March with 150+ members of the local Hispanic community in partnership with Texas A&M International University (a Hispanic Serving Institution). Congressman Henry Cuellar provided opening comments.

Finally, REE completed the engagement series with a Tribal-focused session co-hosted with the United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota, focusing on food, nutrition, and diet-related health disparities in Native American communities, particularly in the Great Plains area. Collectively, these sessions and others like them ensure USDA's science-based solutions to addressing nutrition insecurity and diet-related chronic diseases are impactful and relevant to all the communities we serve.

Increasing Transparency and Public Access to NIFA's Funding Allocations

In June 2023, NIFA released two new public web resources allowing users unprecedented ability to access high-level data about agricultural research funding investments and giving applicants the ability to track the status of their grant applications. The [NIFA Grant Funding Dashboard](#) allows users to pull information on funding investments by research program and grant type, congressional district, recipient type (including Land-grant, minority-serving institutions, Tribal, Hispanic-serving Institutions, and Extension), and other focused searches. It allows users to search for information related to requirements, waivers, and the amount of match funding provided by recipient type and award. Users can also explore a funding map to find NIFA funding obligations by states and congressional districts.

The second resource, the [NIFA Application Status Dashboard](#), enables users to quickly check the status of their application using their assigned Grants.gov tracking number. This new look-up tool offers an easy, convenient way for prospective grantees to view the status of applications for any NIFA funding opportunities they have applied for. The creation of this tool was a high priority for NIFA to increase transparency and enhance the customer service experience for our stakeholders and partners.

These dashboards highlight USDA's commitment to increasing data transparency and accessibility, and support the principles outlined in the [Year of Open Science](#) initiative.

Enhancing Tribal Equity and Research Partnerships

USDA recognizes and honors the contributions Indigenous communities have made to advancing environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship of natural resources. Outcomes associated with this accomplishment include:

- NIFA recently added a [new statement](#) to competitive grant Requests for Applications (RFAs) encouraging applicants to include Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) in their grant proposals when appropriate.
- In FY 2023, NIFA's Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI) RFA established a "Tribal Animal Health Coordination Network" to (1) identify research needs, knowledge gaps, and challenges of agricultural animal health for Tribal communities and Tribal animal producers and (2) incorporate

ITEK to support healthy animals. This builds on NIFA's goal to encourage Tribal producers to apply for AFRI funding opportunities.

- REE scientists and researchers collaborate extensively with 1994 universities, which serve on rapid response and long-term research projects. For example, in FY 2023, ARS scientists in Mandan, North Dakota, created Non-Assistant Cooperative Agreements (NACA) with United Tribes Technical College and Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College to develop seed propagation techniques for culturally sensitive crops. ARS provides space and technical resources to the colleges to conduct this research.
- ARS is partnering with a chef with expertise in Indigenous foods to conduct research at the Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center. Working in collaboration with United Tribes Technical College (a 1994 institution), the project will develop an Indigenous diet that consists of foods consumed prior to the Indian Appropriations Act of 1851 and modern-day substitutions for those foods. Foods will be prepared to ensure they are accessible to any adult wanting to incorporate them into their diet. The diet will be consumed by adult participants to determine whether consuming this diet improves wellbeing and results in increased physical activity.
- With increased funding appropriated in FY 2023, NIFA bolstered its support for Tribal colleges and universities to expand research, extension and formal learning opportunities. This includes more than an 11% increase in funding for Tribal College Research, more than 15% increase in funding Tribal College Extension, and more than 27% in increased funding for Tribal College Education Equity Grants.

Equity Actions

REE's ten equity actions serve four broad goals:

- Evolve REE's research and data portfolio to integrate and reflect American diversity (Actions 1-4)
- Diversify and expand funding for research, education, and extension activities (Actions 5-6)
- Broaden and diversify external partnerships and broadly engage communities (Actions 7-9)
- Strengthen the agricultural and food research talent pipeline and workforce development (Action 10)

Evolve REE's research and data portfolio to integrate and reflect American diversity.

1. Incorporate cultural awareness and knowledge from First Nations in ARS research.

Strengthen the work of ARS with First Nations by educating ARS scientists on cultural awareness when working with Tribal Governments and Colleges and promoting research agreements with Tribal Colleges that encourage student research.

2. Enhance the food and agricultural research capacity at minority serving land-grant universities to help address the needs of their communities.

Increase stakeholder engagement to identify research needs, enhance research collaboration between MSIs and federal agencies, develop and offer new grant programs to address specific needs in minority communities, and invest in facilities and workforce development to help build capacity. Examples include: meetings with 1890 Land-grant leadership and between 1994 Land-grant researchers and ARS researchers; new programs in AFRI to fund research on MSI-initiated topics; and increased funding for MSI facilities and scholarship programs.

3. Fill critical gaps in existing research and data on farmland, its owners, and current farming practices.

Analyze 2023 Census of Agriculture demographic trends and levels of disadvantaged and minority farmers and ranchers at the state and county levels. Develop targeted strategies to increase survey participation in areas where NASS data indicate communities are most underserved and underrepresented.

4. Establish a foundation for future Nutrition Hubs, under the new Agricultural Science Center of Excellence for Nutrition and Diet (ASCEND) for Better Health.

Nutrition Hubs, envisioned to emulate USDA's successful Climate Hubs program, can share tailored, locally grounded, science-based solutions that improve health and well-being of all Americans. By establishing Nutrition Hubs in U.S. communities, REE will better integrate and coordinate the collective work of its agencies to improve food and nutrition security and reduce the burden of diet-related chronic diseases, especially in underserved, at-risk communities. In turn, this will allow REE agencies to increase the impact of their collective contributions to the research community and community at large to better understand the real-world opportunities and challenges around food, nutrition, and diet-related health disparities, and develop coordinated science-based solutions and resources.

Diversify and expand funding for research, education, and extension activities.

5. Improve NIFA grants to enhance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA).

NIFA understands the importance of comprehensively improving its processes for applying for funding to remove barriers that reduce the number of MSIs that apply for and/or receive funding. Given that underserved communities may have a longstanding mistrust of the federal government, new and focused efforts are needed to increase program participation for underserved communities, including but not limited to communities of color, farmworkers, immigrants, refugees, veterans, and young, small-scale beginning farmers. These include:

- Modify Request for Application (RFA) language to address underserved communities.
- Incorporate accessibility best practices (e.g., 508 compliance) and plain language into RFAs, and translate documents into multiple languages and/or modify regulations to remove policy barriers and streamline application procedures.
- Engage with visual/graphic design experts to determine optimal layout and structure for RFAs. Create a set of core DEIA definitions to be utilized consistently across NIFA in RFAs, reports, presentations, etc., keeping in mind legislatively mandated definitions.
- Consider the development of a universal RFA format/template for use across all programs to improve overall ease-of-use and accessibility.
- Continue to conduct grant workshops for MSIs to help ensure their success in implementing NIFA programs (e.g., waivers, compliance). NIFA is establishing a working group to develop more workshops in the future.

6. Update NIFA's panel composition process.

NIFA is continuing to rebuild its workforce, including prioritizing the recruitment and hiring of Panel Managers. While streamlined hiring and onboarding processes increased staff capacity, further improvements are needed to ensure that peer panel review is conducted from a DEIA lens. Peer review panels for grants need to be more transparent and include a balanced composition of panelists that

better represent applicants and reduce panelist bias during application review. Panel composition data need to be collected and accessible for the Equal Opportunity Office to ensure that NIFA is compliant in its EEO practices. Additional actions:

- Develop and conduct standardized training for new agency hires.
- Streamline Panel Manager hiring process to provide opportunity for new candidates to serve.
- Streamline process for collecting demographic data on panel composition and develop a process that ensures panel composition data is reviewed and approved by National Program Leaders and Division Directors.

Broaden and diversify external partnerships and broadly engage communities.

7. Strengthen NASS collaborative relationships with community based organizations

Community based organizations (CBOs) have longstanding experience in advocacy on behalf of their client base; this is particularly true for CBOs that embody and represent harder-to-reach, often underrepresented groups. NASS has found that CBOs are highly successful in promoting awareness of, and encouraging participation in, programs that benefit their communities. Agricultural communities can in turn benefit from USDA programs when NASS partners with the CBOs that represent them, so they have a greater voice. NASS will:

- Make every effort to ensure that all demographic farming and ranching populations are included in the Agency's outreach initiatives.
- Monitor Census of Agriculture demographic trends and levels of participation at the state and county levels.
- Continue partnering and building relationships with CBOs that have grassroots connections and can better reach the hard-to-reach farmer and rancher populations.
- Organize workshops with CBOs to exchange postures and develop further understanding of one another's needs and challenges so that all farmers and ranchers have representation in the Census of Agriculture.
- Update and keep relevant the NASS/CBO collaborative guidebook titled, "Partnering to Count and Serve U.S. Farmers: A Handbook to Increase Participation in the Census of Agriculture."

8. Enhance agricultural law resources to better support BIPOC producers.

ARS's National Agricultural Library (NAL) continues to identify and address additional opportunities for diversity, equity, and inclusion in environmental and social justice issues in agriculture law through the [National Agricultural Law Partnership](#). NAL will:

- Conduct monthly meetings with National Agricultural Law Partnership partners to make and review plans to develop and release content that specifically supports BIPOC farmer and producer issues in the law at National Agricultural Law Center (Arkansas), National Agricultural Library, and Vermont Law School's Center for Agriculture and Food Systems. NAL will carry out at least two focus groups through the National Agricultural Law Partnership to understand the continuing needs of BIPOC communities in agriculture and the law.
- Host quarterly Wikipedia edit-a-thon events to raise awareness and develop new publicly accessible content on topics such as Heirs' Property, Environmental Justice and Food System Sustainability, Childhood Nutrition focused on food insecurity and programs which improve access, and cooperative farming in urban areas.
- Engage the National Agricultural Law Partnership partners to develop or renew connections with 1890 and 1994 institutions, their student organizations, and others to promote career opportunities in agriculture, particularly agricultural law and related fields.

9. Partner with trusted groups to combat faith-based discrimination

REE is dedicated to addressing antisemitism, Islamophobic, hate, and related forms of discrimination across U.S. institutions of higher education, particularly in rural and land-grant colleges and their communities. NIFA will collaborate with USDA offices such as the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to develop resources and facilitate educational opportunities to combat faith-based forms of discrimination.

Strengthen the agricultural and food research talent pipeline and workforce development.

10. Build a more diverse talent pipeline for agricultural research.

ARS has long invested in partnerships and programs to develop a robust pipeline of K-12, undergraduate, and graduate students. The agency is strengthening support for underserved and underrepresented communities pursuing careers in agricultural research and will:

- Expand the scope and partnerships of the Three Sisters Project, an ARS educational outreach initiative to mobilize fresh ideas, talent, and diversity in ranks of tomorrow's scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, and ag professionals. Each ARS Area will be expected to develop partnerships with aligned agricultural high schools with high enrollments of students from underrepresented communities.
- Continue to expand collaborations with 1890 Land-Grant Universities by exploring internship opportunities and other hiring flexibilities such as stipend, tuition fee, and other expenses (in case of temporary relocation) to attract talented young people.
- Expand special emphasis programs to target talents from institutions serving students from underrepresented communities.

For more information on equity at REE, 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)
- [USDA Environmental Justice Scorecard](#)
- [USDA Advisory Committees](#)
- [Get Started! A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers](#) (July 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)

REE Mission Area Resources

- [USDA REE Website:](#)
 - [ASCEND for Better Health](#)
 - [USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023-2026](#)
 - [AGARDA: A Vision for Disruptive Science to Confront Audacious Challenges](#)
- [USDA Agricultural Research Service Website](#)
- [USDA Economic Research Service Website](#)
- [USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Website](#)
 - [USDA NASS Make Sure Your Farm or Ranch Counts!](#)
- [USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#)
 - [USDA NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)
- [USDA Office of the Chief Scientist](#)
- [USDA National Agricultural Library](#)
- [USDA Research and Science](#)

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](#)
- [Executive Order 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
- [Executive Order 14096, Revitalizing our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All](#)
- [Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments](#)
- [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 Goals

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.