

2025 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the “Budget” is in regard to the 2025 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2022 and 2023, annualized Continuing Resolution levels for 2024, and the President’s Budget request for 2025. Amounts for 2024 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the “2018 Farm Bill” is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2023. Amounts shown in 2024 and 2025 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Departmental Administration (DA) was established to ensure the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) administrative programs and policies meet the needs of USDA program organizations and are consistent with laws and mandates. DA provides leadership to ensure timely and effective delivery of high quality and cost-effective mission support services across the Department, and coordinates human resources, procurement, property management, emergency preparedness and response activities, and programs for small and disadvantaged business utilization.

DA consists of the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), the Office of Property and Environmental Management (OPEM), the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP), the Office of Operations (OO), and the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU).

DA is located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2023, there were 256 permanent full-time employees, funded by appropriated funds (80) and the Working Capital Fund (176). Of these employees 175 were in Washington D.C. and 81 were in field offices.

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

Departmental Administration did not have any Office of Inspector General or Government Accountability Office evaluation reports during the prior year.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs

Table DA-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$23,282	65	\$26,716	68	\$26,716	82	\$45,207	108
Lapsing Balances	-229	-	-740	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations, DA.....	23,053	65	25,976	68	26,716	82	45,207	108
Other USDA:								
Reimbursements from USDA								
Agencies.....	20,540	41	21,045	39	21,500	39	21,500	39
Flexible Spending Account.....	796	-	514	-	520	-	520	-
Human Resources Priority Goals.....	-	-	3,156	2	2,150	2	3,150	2
Medical Services.....	1,500	-	1,780	-	1,800	-	1,800	-
Shuttle Services.....	4,343	-	4,334	-	4,400	-	4,400	-
Talent Group	-	-	3,359	5	3,400	5	3,400	5
Target Center	1,269	3	1,544	3	1,600	3	1,600	3
Oversight Compliance	1,222	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee Labor Relations.....	1,044	7	1,322	7	1,350	7	1,350	7
Office of Customer Experience	8,195	1	2,978	1	3,000	1	3,000	1
Real Property Leasing.....	2,117	-	1,395	-	1,400	-	1,400	-
NCR Interpreting Services.....	510	-	848	-	900	-	900	-
Working Capital Fund.....	78,265	158	61,121	176	70,500	176	70,500	176
Total, Other USDA	119,801	210	103,396	233	113,520	233	113,520	233
Total Available, DA.....	143,083	274	130,112	301	140,236	315	158,727	341

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs

Table DA-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	2022			2023			2024			2025		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
SES.....	5	1	6	5	1	6	5	1	6	6	1	7
GS-15	12	8	20	12	8	20	12	8	20	17	8	25
GS-14	43	21	64	47	27	69	47	22	69	54	24	78
GS-13	54	27	81	58	28	86	58	28	86	61	29	90
GS-12	28	7	35	29	6	35	29	6	35	32	7	39
GS-11	9	8	17	9	11	20	9	11	20	11	11	22
GS-10	2	4	6	2	4	6	2	4	6	3	4	7
GS-9	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6
GS-8	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1	4
GS-7	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-6	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
Total Permanent	166	77	243	175	81	256	175	81	256	197	85	282
Total Perm. FT EOY	166	77	243	175	81	256	175	81	256	197	85	282
FTE*	209	65	274	220	81	301	234	81	315	257	84	341

*Total FTEs are all inclusive of workforce categories including temporary positions.

VEHICLE FLEET

Motor Vehicle Fleet

The DA/OO fleet is located in the D.C. Metropolitan area at the USDA South Building, Material Management Service Center in Beltsville, MD, and George Washington Carver Center (GWCC). DA/OO's 2024 budget estimate is expected to increase substantially due to the acquisition of zero emission passenger motor vehicles and supporting charging/fueling infrastructure to support Executive Order 14037. DA/OO will continue to review its inventory to assess the need to acquire or dispose of vehicles in its fleet. As individual leases expire, DA/OO will work with General Services Administration (GSA) to replace existing light duty conventional gas vehicles with alternative fuel vehicles that meet our mission requirements.

16 of the 19 vehicles have GeoTab real-time fleet management technology and drive safety devices installed. The technology is being used to provide vehicle tracking, fuel analysis diagnostics, driver safety analysis, and other data collection that is used by managers for vehicle monitoring and mandatory reporting. Two agency-owned vehicles and one GSA leased vehicle do not have GeoTab devices installed due to semiconductor shortages due to supply chain issues. It is unclear when the remaining three vehicles will have the GeoTab devices installed.

Material Management Service Center (MMSC)

MMSC manages the Centralized Excess Property Operation (CEPO) and the Consolidated Forms and Publication Distribution Center (CFPDC) divisions for USDA. To support this mission, MMSC currently maintains a total of seven motor vehicles: three 26' box trucks, one tractor trailer, and one Dodge Caravan (8- passenger). These vehicles are leased from GSA. MMSC also has two agency-owned vehicles: one Dodge Crew Cab and one Ford F550 tow truck.

The 26' box trucks and the tractor trailer are utilized in the daily pickup and delivery services for CEPO and CFPDC customers. The number of vehicles is determined by the number of truck drivers and the volume of property that needs to be picked up and delivered. The Caravan and Explorer are used to transport customers to the Beltsville Service Center to conduct business, transport employees to business meetings and USDA sponsored events, and deliver/pick-up smaller property items. The Dodge Crew Cab pickup is used to transport cargo typically too small to efficiently use the 26' box trucks and tractor trailer. The F550 tow truck is used to dispose of USDA vehicles that are inoperable.

Mail and Reproduction Management Division (MRMD)

MRMD maintains eleven vehicles in its fleet: three LD passenger minivans, three MD passenger minivans, one LD cargo van, two MD cargo vans, one MD box truck, and one compact sedan. The compact sedan and one LD passenger minivan are plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.

The box truck is used to deliver freight, bulk mail items, and copier paper. The passenger vans and cargo vans are used to:

- Deliver scheduled mail service between the USDA Headquarters complex and USDA leased locations.
- Transport same-day customer requested pick-up and delivery of high priority special delivery items to and from various Cabinet Departments, independent agencies, and private sector business associations.
- Transportation of groups of employees and/or official visitors to conferences, meetings, or official functions at locations in the DC metro area.
- Lease to other Agencies and Offices that might need to utilize them on an as-needed basis.

The hybrid electric sedan is used to provide transportation support and chauffeuring services for twenty-nine USDA agencies within the National Capital Region. This vehicle is used to chauffeur and provide special transportation for Very Important Persons such as Assistant Secretaries, Directors, and Officials.

Facility Management Division (FMD)

FMD maintains one vehicle in its fleet. FMD uses a heavy duty 4x4 pickup truck to pick up materials from vendors to support facility operations and travel to GWCC to provide facility support. It supports snow removal operations as necessary.

Replacement Criteria

Departmental Administration will continue to follow GSA regulatory standards which are six years or 60,000 miles, except in the event Fleet Management reduced utilization dictates otherwise. Vehicle replacement is based on funding priority, program management, vehicle mileage, vehicle age, and utilization.

Reductions to Fleet

There are no changes expected for 2024 from 2023.

Table DA-3. Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle Fleet

Item	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Trucks 4X2	Light Trucks 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2018 End of Year Operating Inventory	2	5	-	-	-	8	-	5	20	\$93,000
2022 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	-	-	-	8	-	7	19	94,000
2023 Actual Acquisitions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023 Actual Disposals.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	-	-	-	8	-	7	19	99,300
2024 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2024 Planned Disposals.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2024 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	-	-	-	8	-	7	19	108,300
2025 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2025 Planned Disposals.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2025 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	-	-	-	58	-	57	119	680,000

Note: Number of vehicles by type include vehicles owned by the agency and leased from commercial sources or GSA.

Annual Operating Costs excludes acquisition costs and gains from sale of vehicles as shown in FAST.

Table DA-4. Statement of Proposed Purchase of Passenger Motor Vehicles

Fiscal Year	Net Active Fleet, SOY	Disposals	Replacements	Additions	Total Acquisitions	Net Active Fleet, EOY
2022	19	-	-	-	-	19
2023	19	-	1	-	-	19
2024	19	-	-	-	-	19
2025	19	-	100	-	-	19

Note: The number of vehicles planned for replacement would be as part of the Vehicle Fleet Electrification initiative and would be allocated across the Department.Shared Funding Projects

Table DA-5. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA Contact Center	-	\$80	\$122	\$122
Fleet Charge Card Services.....	-	-	-	1
Material Management Service	\$133	119	120	116
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	307	354	434	429
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	219	269	193	-
Procurement Operations Services.....	1,577	2,083	2,439	2,422
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	5	5	5	5
Subtotal	2,241	2,910	3,313	3,095
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	24	-	16	12
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center	114	120	121	112
Financial Management Systems	696	610	570	546
Internal Control Support Services.....	73	83	84	79
Financial Management Support Services.....	2,095	2,276	2,490	2,422
Personnel and Document Security	-	18	21	21
Subtotal	2,978	3,106	3,286	3,398
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	3,244	3,421	2,901	2,804
Department Administration Information Technology Office	3,317	4,011	3,485	3,592
Digital Infrastructure Services Center	2,162	4,350	2,190	2,068
Enterprise Network Services.....	406	403	602	551
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	-	164	408	459
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services.....	-	795	47	44
Subtotal	9,129	13,144	9,633	9,518
Office of the Executive Secretariat	14	103	107	74
Total, Working Capital Fund	14,386	19,263	16,355	16,097
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Agency Partnership Outreach	26	27	31	31
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	-	7	11	11
Employee Experience	-	13	16	16
Medical Services.....	78	76	122	122
Office of Customer Experience	36	12	13	13
Personnel and Document Security Program	18	-	-	-
Physical Security.....	18	17	20	20
Security Detail	19	19	22	22
Security Operations Program.....	26	26	32	32
Talent Group	-	13	14	14
TARGET Center	5	6	7	7
TARGET Center NCR Interpreting Services	19	27	51	51
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	18	-	-	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	263	243	339	339
E-Gov:				
E-Rulemaking	40	94	35	94
Geospatial Line of Business.....	13	13	13	13
Grants.gov	10	-	13	-
Total, E-Gov	63	107	61	107
Agency Total.....	14,712	19,613	16,755	16,543

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ACCOUNT I: SALARIES AND EXPENSES**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

Office of the Secretary (Including Transfers of Funds)

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$112,634,000~~]\$103,025,000, of which not to exceed [~~\$34,713,000~~]\$20,669,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed [~~\$2,396,000~~]\$3,174,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed [~~\$6,533,000~~]\$6,613,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations, of which \$1,000,000 shall be [to establish]available for a Tribal Public Health Resource Center at a land grant university with existing indigenous public health expertise to expand current partnerships and collaborative efforts with indigenous groups, including but not limited to, tribal organizations and institutions such as tribal colleges, tribal technical colleges, tribal community colleges and tribal universities, to improve the delivery of culturally appropriate public health services and functions in American Indian communities focusing on indigenous food sovereignty; not to exceed [~~\$10,357,000~~]\$9,339,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), of which \$1,500,000 shall be for 7 U.S.C. 2279(c)(5); not to exceed [~~\$37,369,000~~]\$46,944,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$35,627,000~~]\$45,207,000 shall be available for Departmental Administration to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department, of which \$12,000,000 shall be available for the hire and purchase of zero emission passenger vehicles and supporting charging or fueling infrastructure: *Provided*, That funds made available by this Act to an agency in the Administration mission area for salaries and expenses are available to fund up to one administrative support staff for the Office; not to exceed [~~\$4,727,000~~]\$4,709,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed [~~\$16,539,000~~]\$11,577,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to transfer funds appropriated for any office of the Office of the Secretary to any other office of the Office of the Secretary[: *Provided further*; That, of the funds provided under this heading, up to \$4,000,000 may be transferred to OPPE and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to carry out section 12301 of Public Law 115–334]: *Provided further*, That, of the funds provided under this heading, up to [~~\$20,000,000~~]\$10,000,000 may be transferred to the Farm Service Agency to carry out section [729]727 of title VII of this Act: *Provided further*, That no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: *Provided further*; That not to exceed \$22,000 of the amount made available under this paragraph for the Immediate Office of the Secretary shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the amount made available under this heading for Departmental Administration shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by 5U.S.C. 551-558: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level: *Provided further*, That no funds made available under this heading for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency: *Provided further*, That during any 30 day notification period referenced in section 716 of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall take no action to begin implementation of the action that is subject to section 716 of this Act or make any public announcement of such action in any form.

Change Description

The first change (line 5 of paragraph 1) modifies language for the Tribal Public Health Resource Center that is within the Office of Tribal Relations. The Tribal Public Health Resource Center was previously established, and the language is updated to reflect that the funds are now available.

The second change (line 16 of paragraph 1) adds language to include the zero-emission passenger vehicle fleet funding for Departmental Administration.

The third change (line 25 of paragraph 1) removes language that transfers funding from the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture for the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program.

The fourth change (line 28 of paragraph 1) reflects the updated General Provision section number for the Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Initiative.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table DA-6. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2024	\$26,716,000
Change in Appropriation	+ 18,491,000
Budget Estimate, 2025	<u>45,207,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table DA-7. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs			
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Dept Administration.....	\$23,282	65	\$26,716	68	\$26,716	82	\$33,207	108	+\$6,491	+26	(1)
ZEV/Charging Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,000	-	+12,000	-	(2)
Total Available.....	23,282	65	26,716	68	26,716	82	45,207	108	+18,491	+26	
Lapsing Balances	-229	-	-740	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Obligations	<u>23,053</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>25,976</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>26,716</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>45,207</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>+18,491</u>	<u>+26</u>	

Table DA-8. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs		
Discretionary Obligations:										
Dept Administration.....	\$23,053	65	\$25,976	68	\$26,716	82	\$33,207	108	+\$6,491	+26
ZEV/Charging Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,000	-	+12,000	-
Total Obligations	23,053	65	25,976	68	26,716	82	45,207	108	+18,491	+26
Lapsing Balances	229	-	740	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation	<u>23,282</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>26,716</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>26,716</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>45,207</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>+18,491</u>	<u>+26</u>

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES**Departmental Administration**

This program was established to provide management leadership to ensure that the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) administrative programs and policies meet the needs of USDA program organizations and are consistent with laws and mandates. DA's functions include human resources, procurement and property management, homeland security, and historically underserved business utilization.

The numbers and letters of the following listing relates to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

- (1) An increase of \$6,491,000 and 26 FTEs in Departmental Administration (\$26,716,000 and 82 FTEs available in 2024).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- A) An increase of \$544,000 for 2024 Pay.

This increase will support an annualization of the 2024 5.2 percent Cost of Living pay increase and the 2025 2.0 percent Cost of Living pay increase. The funding will support Departmental Administration (DA) and its sub-offices to continue to meet its objective in administering and overseeing programs relating to USDA operations. This critical increase is needed to support and maintain current staffing levels to meet the demands and statutory requirements imposed on DA. Elimination of the pay cost increase means the DA would not be able to fund its FTEs and/or would need to significantly cut travel, training, and mission support. Approximately 51 percent of program's budget supports personnel compensation and benefits. Failure to receive this increase would adversely impact DA's ability to effectively carryout mission critical functions which are necessary in providing continued operational support for all areas of the Department as well as meeting the needs of the Executive Office of the President and members of Congress.

- B) An increase of \$330,000 and 1 FTE to support Buy America implementation in the Office of Contracting and Procurement.

This funding will allow OCP to establish one FTE to support Buy America implementation and to provide developmental training to the USDA acquisition workforce. This funding will ensure that OCP has sufficient staff to implement Administration priorities to include the "Buy American" initiative which is instrumental towards finding American companies that can compete for future contracts as well as awarding and administering the resulting contracts.

- C) An increase of \$2,000,000 and 5 FTEs for the Office of Customer Experience.

USDA's Office of Customer Experience (OCX) was established under Departmental Administration to lead the effort to improve customer experience (CX) across USDA. OCX leads USDA's CX commitment to providing the highest quality experience to both customers and employees by using data, human-centered design practices, innovative tools, and training to improve the Department's delivery of services to a diverse range of customers, including employees, farmers, scientists, children, families, foresters, state governments, and more. As a Department-level organization, OCX is strategically positioned to ensure that a human-centered design approach and perspective is implemented across our programs and services that impact the vast public that we serve. OCX drives USDA's understanding of its customers and maintains a Department-Wide customer experience 'lens'. This informs opportunities to reduce administrative burden, advance equity, and promote transparency in order to meet the needs and exceed the expectations of our customers – the American people. This includes building the customer experience expertise and capacity across the Department necessary to design and facilitate these activities. OCX identifies and baselines the public's level of trust in USDA's high impact services. This establishes accountability across USDA policy, planning, programs, and practices to deliver the value that the American people expect and deserve. OCX is leading USDA's coordination and response to Executive Order 14058, *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government*, in partnership with all USDA Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices. This includes

coordination and governance across all USDA High Impact Service Providers (HISPs) defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

USDA has more HISPs than any other Cabinet-level Department in the Federal government. It also includes establishing Department-wide CX policies, regulations, governance. OCX anticipates supporting the implementation of the President’s Management Agenda Priority #2 and USDA’s Agency Priority Goal (APG) action planning process. The funding will be used to onboard one SES, two GS/15s, two GS/14s and one GS/13.

- D) Total increase of \$3,617,000 and 20 FTEs for OHRM includes the following increases.

Diversity, Recruitment and Employee Engagement Division (10 FTEs and \$1,500,000)

This increase will be used to support a more robust Diversity, Recruitment and Employee Engagement Division within the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) that spearheads USDA’s efforts to leverage existing outreach and recruitment efforts across the Department to create effective pipelines for attracting, hiring, developing, rewarding, and retaining a diverse and talented workforce that is responsive to and reflective of the agricultural sector and USDA’s customers. This Division is tasked with expanding employment opportunities across USDA’s Mission Areas, with particular focus on underserved communities, which directly aligns with the Administration’s effort to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within the Federal workforce, while simultaneously advancing succession planning efforts. This division is also responsible for administering USDA’s Human Resources Priority Goals Program, formerly known as the Honor Awards program, as well as devising result analyses and promulgating action plans pertaining to annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) activities across the Department.

Training and Talent Management Division (8 FTEs and \$1,100,000)

The Talent Management Division (TMD) within the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) provides leadership in policies, programs, implementation of government wide initiatives, and human capital goals through the design and development of comprehensive employee, supervisory, and executive training, as well as mentorship and student intern programs. Aligned with USDA’s strategic goal of attracting, hiring, and retaining a talented and diverse workforce, TMD administers an effective talent management program that further develops the skillsets of our employee population coupled with fostering innovative training modalities for the hybrid work environment. The program is working to address workforce development needs and lead in creating a “best-in class” learning organization to ensure that USDA has training and developmental opportunities to enhance employees’ skills and competencies while expanding career paths options for employees and upward mobility and leadership role opportunities. This program is further developing technological resources to enable improved data collection and reporting mechanisms that will assist with compliance oversight and analyses of Mission Area and agency activities in the training and development areas. Obtaining a clear picture and understanding of employee development efforts – including the long-term success of Student Intern programs – is critical to USDA’s strategic workforce planning.

Strategic Human Resources Planning and Accountability Division (2 FTEs and \$1,017,000)

This increase will support the dormant Strategic Human Resources Planning and Accountability Division within the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) that will lead a Department-wide effort to proactively promote strategic and organizational development within the disciplines comprising of Human Resources (HR) programs within the Mission Areas. This Division will also provide USDA with a vital tool for independent accountability and assessment of how HR programs effectively operate and satisfy OPM requirements, as well as help solve identified deficiencies which will ultimately reduce liability and help protect the integrity of the Department’s delegated authorities.

- (2) An increase of \$12,000,000 for acquisition of zero-emission (EV) passenger motor vehicle and supporting charging/fueling infrastructure.

This increase consists of \$3,000,000 for EV charging station infrastructure and \$9,000,000 for electric vehicles transformation. This will not enable USDA to support the Administration’s goals to electrify its vehicle fleet and move USDA towards to goal of supporting the Administration’s net-zero vehicle emission operations

initiative. In 2021, the Biden Administration issued two executive orders aimed at increasing the use of electric vehicles and electric vehicle technology throughout the United States. This initiative aimed to accelerate shifting the country closer to achieving its net-zero emissions goal.

USDA put into place actions to support this initiative and to transform its fleet into one more resilient and reliant on electric vehicle technology. Strategic planning efforts were implemented to identify and mitigate the challenges to electrify the agency’s fleet. In response to this initiative, USDA established a long-term electrification plan that requires significant upfront effort and funding. USDA believes this approach will benefit the agency’s immediate and long-term fuel efficiency goals and provide a high return on investment (ROI).

USDA’s strategic plan to achieve a 100 percent light-duty ZEV-acquisition rate by 2027 and 100 percent ZEV-acquisition rate for medium-duty and heavy-duty vehicles by 2035 will not be accomplished without the funding. Movement towards these goals will also not occur without funding to signify the support this initiative maintains and its prominence in the Administration’s strategic goals. Inadequate funding will not allow USDA to move forward with implementing and executing its ZEV fleet strategic plan, negatively impacting the entire USDA fleet management and alternative fuel vehicle program.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs

Table DA-9. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	\$165	1	\$167	1	\$169	1	\$172	1
District of Columbia	22,151	60	25,065	63	25,794	77	32,272	103
Michigan	173	1	175	1	177	1	180	1
Minnesota.....	213	1	215	1	218	1	220	1
Missouri	171	1	173	1	175	1	178	1
New Mexico.....	180	1	181	1	183	1	185	1
Obligations.....	23,053	65	25,976	68	26,716	82	33,207	108
Lapsing Balances	229	-	740	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	23,282	65	26,716	68	26,716	82	33,207	108

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table DA-10 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.....	\$8,008	\$8,648	\$13,865	\$15,071
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	897	911	2167	2,323
11	Total personnel compensation.....	8,905	9,559	16,032	17,394
12	Personal benefits	2,998	3,367	4,198	4,501
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	6	1	9	9
	Total, personnel comp., and benefits	11,909	12,927	21,813	22,904
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons.....	53	187	200	200
22.0	Transportation of things	7	1	5	5
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	1,233	408	450	650
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	36	37	40	40
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	2,927	3,849	1,118	2,040
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources.....	6,754	8,352	2,800	7,148
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	94	126	130	130
31.0	Equipment	40	84	85	85
43.0	Interest and Dividends.....	-	5	5	5
	Total, Other Objects	11,144	13,049	4,903	10,303
99.9	Total, new obligations	23,053	25,945	26,716	33,207
DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)		\$29	\$48	\$39	\$40
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$214,000	\$217,560	\$221,340	\$115,888
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$109,065	\$112,740	\$115,325	\$118,000
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

Departmental Administration (DA) provides overall direction, leadership, and coordination for the Department's management of human resources, property and fleet, procurement, small and disadvantaged business utilization, homeland security, customer experience, building and facilities operations, and safety and security programs under the leadership and guidance of the Assistant Secretary for Administration. DA is funded through the Office of the Secretary's appropriation. Activities of the offices that comprise DA are as follows.

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)

Current Activities

Our employees are our greatest resource. OHRM is the conduit for driving organizational performance in planning and directing the USDA enterprise human resources portfolio of services and programs to ensure the Department has the workforce and expertise necessary to fulfill its mission. To achieve this, OHRM effectuates hiring reforms and adopts technology improvements that are designed toward attracting and hiring a highly qualified and diverse workforce. OHRM provides timely, Department-wide guidance for addressing the human resources barriers that USDA faces in the Federal hiring process. Additionally, OHRM formulates and administers Departmental policies, procedures, and directives concerning position classification and management; training and employee development; employee and labor relations; executive resources management; staffing acquisition and recruitment and onboarding; leave and compensation; strategic and workforce planning; enterprise software applications and systems management; benefits and performance management; employee awards and recognition; and organizational initiatives.

Selected Examples of Recent Initiatives

Robust hiring strategies and collaborative efforts to hire mission critical personnel vacancies. OHRM partners with USDA Mission Areas to identify hiring goals for permanent, temporary, and term positions by occupational series and grade to align with Departmental strategic goals. Aggregate agency data generated by this activity is used to develop strategies for hiring, recruitment and retention, including use of incentives and requests for direct hire authorities and populates dashboards that assist in monitoring progress on reaching goals. OHRM oversees and executes the strategy to secure or expand Direct Hire authorities granted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for agencies including, but not limited to Forest Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. OHRM coordinates extensively with OPM to present evidence and data supporting the need to secure these hiring flexibilities which have resulted in highly skilled candidate pools and expedited hiring across USDA.

Interactive Resources and Training. OHRM developed an interactive guide to help hiring managers understand the federal hiring process and the vital role the selecting official plays in recruiting the best employees for USDA. The guide covers a range of topics including Merit Systems Principles, the recruitment process, application period, candidate evaluation, onboarding, and several other topics related to the employment life cycle. OHRM also launched the USDA Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program designed to competitively identify and develop a diverse cadre of highly qualified candidates to fill executive leadership positions in USDA and Federal service.

Revitalized Performance Management System. OHRM continues to enhance and refine the automated enterprise performance management application (EPMA) system used by all USDA employees and supervisors. OHRM provides guidance on tools and resources to promote employee accountability and engagement and ways to reward and retain top performers. OHRM developed a new Enterprise Remote/Telework Agreement (ERT) module within EPMA for recording, tracking, and reporting remote and telework agreements across the USDA. This project supports USDA's efforts to assess and analyze remote and telework human capital strategies Department-wide.

Expanded development of HR data analytics through new and enhanced dashboards. OHRM continues to lead an aggressive expansion of human capital dashboards with increased functionality and robust, real-time information including the recently launched Employee Engagement Dashboard. This tool tracks and displays historical "Best Places to Work" scores within USDA using a heat map across the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey major indices to highlight areas where opportunities for improvement exist and areas of success where learning and best practices can be replicated. These efforts align with initiatives to advance accountability and instill informed data

driven decision-making – especially in the areas of hiring and retention – while reducing manual and inefficient Mission Area HR data reporting demands.

Fellows Programs. OHRM expanded the use of the USDA Fellows Experience Program (FEP) to include GS-2 to GS-15 positions. The FEP offers opportunities to highly talented and diverse individuals to gain exposure to careers in public administration and agricultural program areas, while developing talent to fill specialty/program area occupations. In addition, the program provides more experienced practitioners the opportunity to enhance their professional skills in the public arena. This complements OHRM's continuing work with Mission Areas to expand Pathways opportunities and champion available intern hiring authorities through the Student Employment Council charged with coordinating USDA internship initiatives.

Advancing Robotics Processing Automation (RPA) in the HR space to reduce time spent on routine transaction processing. OHRM is leading the pilot development and implementation of Enterprise HR RPA across the Department. Automating labor-intensive HR personnel action and transactional processes reduces the associated execution time from days or hours down to minutes or overnight batch processing, thus enabling USDA Human Resources Offices to gain efficiencies and redirect vital resources to support areas performing HR work that lack adequate or ideal resources commensurate to meet work demands. The lessons learned from this pilot effort will lead to faster and more efficient adoption of the automation of routine HR processing work.

The Office of Property and Environmental Management (OPEM)

Current Activities

OPEM provides Department-wide administration, leadership, oversight, and policy in the areas of real and personal property acquisition, utilization and disposal, fleet charge card and fleet, transportation, and aviation management. The Office provides quarterly oversight and compliance reports on USDA's leasing portfolio and provides guidance to agencies on best practices. Additionally, OPEM develops and administers policy and guidance for environmental management at USDA, including response and restoration, facilities energy management, and sustainable operations. As a result, USDA received 2022 Energy and Sustainability Awards from Department of Energy Federal Energy Management Program and the 2023 EPEAT Purchaser Award at the 4-star level for excellence in sustainable purchasing of IT products from the Green Electronics Council.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

In 2023, in alignment with USDA strategic goals, OPEM developed and implemented the space optimization plan approved by the Secretary. This resulted in a reduction of 784,000 square feet. These space reduction efforts will result in USDA realizing over \$30 million in cost avoidance annually and over \$600 million in the 20-year lease term. OPEM provided operational support, training, and technical assistance to Mission Areas resulting in a 28 percent reduction in lease holdovers.

OPEM continued to increase USDA's real property oversight and compliance reviews. Over the last four years, OPEM's streamlined processes increased the number of reviews per year.

OPEM partnered with the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) to improve fleet card operations and develop procedures to transfer the fleet card program from OCP to OPEM. Over the last quarter of 2023, OCP and OPEM transitioned the fleet card program to OPEM for future management.

The Hazardous Materials Management Program funded over \$7.5 million to agencies for environmental clean-up projects. As a result of this initiative, OPEM recovered \$2 million from polluters to prevent contaminants in water this year.

OPEM initiatives resulted in achieving 'green' scores in 5 sustainability goals for 2021 on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Sustainability Scorecard, which resulted in a 21 percent reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission at USDA sustainable operations.

To support fleet management strategic goals, OPEM led the team to increase installation of telematics technology on USDA vehicles. In 2023, OPEM's goal was the installation of 10,000 telematics units. OPEM efforts led USDA to far exceed this goal by deploying and installing 20,974 telematics units in USDA vehicles.

Established USDA's first Real Property Capital Investment Board (RPCIB) comprised of senior-level representatives of each Mission Areas and key departmental offices, to align budget formulation and projections, coordinate space optimization initiatives, and capital planning process initiatives. The RPCIB provided the conduit to align the capital planning process in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-21-25, *Integrating Planning for A*

Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment.

The Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP)

Current Activities

OCP provides Department-wide leadership, management and oversight in contracts and procurement. OCP is an organizational leader delivering service, accountability, and stewardship across Departmental procurement priorities. OCP is responsible for Department-wide procurement policy, contracting innovation, Enterprise-wide procurement systems, and procurement operations servicing all USDA agencies and staff offices.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

Acquisition Workforce Management

Established the first USDA Procurement Training Program in support of the June 2021 Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce. This program hired and is developing 28 recent college graduates, veterans, military spouses, and USDA staff to be contract specialists and is a key component of our succession plan for an aging workforce.

Provided a low-cost training platform for USDA employees to earn over 6,500 continuous learning points virtually in 2023 to meet certification requirements. Managed USDA Acquisition Workforce certification and related processes for more than 8,000 contracting officer representatives, over 700 contracting officials (35 with Digital Service specialization), 440 program managers (over 50 with IT specialization), Department-wide. A working group streamlined the certification review and approval process to reduce turnaround time from 45+ days to 20 days.

Implemented USDA's first Acquisition Program Management Office (APMO), providing requirements development assistance and facilitation of procurement requirements and innovations supporting Acquisition Program and Project Management across the Department. The APMO is drafting USDA's first Acquisition Program Management Desk Book, a comprehensive guide for Acquisition Program and Project Management, focused on continued improvements in acquisition planning, resulting in better mission outcomes and inclusion of a broader supplier base.

Established an USDA-wide P/PM Community of Practice (CoP) that serves as a complement to the Federal P/PM CoP. The CoP will provide a wide variety of resources, discussion boards, coaching opportunities, training and templates to the program and project management community in USDA.

Procurement Policy

Implemented the enterprise-wide Internal Review Program in which policy was written and implemented in 2023 to review mission area compliance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR), and OCP desk book. Best practices were identified and shared with the procurement workforce in multiple forums. Opportunities for improvement were also identified, and correction action plans developed and approved to address these weaknesses.

Led and managed the Enterprise-wide Government Purchase Card (GPC) Program which executed 839,000 transactions worth approximately \$484 million in expenditures and generated over \$9 million in rebates during 2023.

USDA (through the AgPay XP project with the pilot launch in August 2023) is issuing single use cards to make contract payments to participating vendors using the existing invoice workflows which generates additional GPC rebates.

Developed two new Single Sign-On (SSO) interfaces with externally hosted systems supporting the GPC Program and will continue to pursue additional opportunities in the future. These SSO connections improve security and allow for an improved user experience in accessing the systems without maintaining additional passwords.

USDA is the largest participant in GSA's Commercial Platform Program (CPP) with over \$25 million in expenditures and estimated savings of over \$555,000. In the future, USDA will transition to the CPP awards from GSA and continue to use these strategic tools to assist agencies in meeting mission while saving money. The GPC Program will continue to pursue strategic opportunities to assist agencies in meeting their mission while providing an efficient tool for actions under the micro-purchase threshold using new bank products, platforms, etc.

Procurement Systems

OCP and OSDBU created a public-facing, web-based Procurement Forecast Tool. The tool removes barriers to full and equal participation in USDA’s procurement opportunities in underserved communities by making USDA procurement opportunities easy to identify, accessible, searchable, and actionable. Over 5,000 entries were available in the tool for 2023. USDA implemented a communication plan to increase awareness and use, including announcements via a USDA press release, SAM.Gov, SBA, and more. In addition, a vendor capability portal was deployed which enable companies to submit its vendor capability statements to USDA mission areas.

Maintained the “green” rating for OCP’s Integrated Acquisition System (IAS) from OCIO for over ten consecutive years for overall management of cost, risks, and other governance requirements. Maintained 100 percent system availability – outside of planned maintenance – supporting over 7,000 users serving various roles in the procurement process: Requisitioner, Budget Approver, Contract Specialist (CS), Contracting Officer Representative (COR), Invoice Approver, and Reporting User.

Implemented substantial invoice processing changes within IAS for the AgPay XPress project which enables vendors to get paid faster while USDA receives rebates from U.S. Bank on contract payments. Currently in pilot phase.

Implemented an Award Correction Utility within IAS which has eliminated the need for approximately 3,000 contract administrative modifications in 2023. Continued to support an automated contract closeout process, in which closed over 60,000 awards in an automated fashion and deobligated over \$16 million freeing up funds in a timelier manner for other mission needs. Processed over 7,000 e-mail-sourced requests via Contract File Upload and

In coordination with OCIO, OCP implemented new interfaces and customizations to share information on IT Investments and their associated contracts between IAS and AgMAX (OCIO system), increasing accountability and data integrity for acquisition planning, contract award and contract administration.

Pillars Implementation

OCP led USDA’s implementation of procurement efforts related to various executive orders under the “The Pillars of Sustainable and Innovative Acquisition” Program. Focus areas included equity in procurement, climate smart acquisition, worker well-being, supply chain resilience. Key accomplishments include:

- Exceeded SB goals for all 5 socio-economic categories for 2023 to include Small and Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB’s).
- Developed a partnership with Department of Labor to advance labor law compliance in USDA acquisition activity. In addition, developed a solution Contract Deliverable Requirements List (CDRL) implementation which will increase visibility into prime contractors chosen subcontractors and the types of services that they will perform on USDA contracts for food commodities and labor-intensive contracts.
- Creation of acquisition workforce guidance and templates related to climate smart acquisition standards in USDA acquisition activity. This included contract clause selection tool, and evaluation factors that could be used in future source selections.
- Supply chain risk mitigation efforts including contract award to a 2nd company to provide fire retardant to the Forest Service to address the biggest supply chain threat to USDA. In addition, mission area risk mitigation plans were approved for FSIS and APHIS for their respective supply chain risks.

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)

Current Activities

OSDBU has primary responsibility for leading the implementation of the Department’s Small Business Program, providing maximum opportunity for Small, Small Disadvantaged, Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone), Women-Owned, and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses to participate in USDA contracting processes and to fully integrate small business into all aspects of USDA contracting and program activities. OSDBU ensures that the Department implements the AbilityOne Program, that encourages contracting with nonprofit agencies that employ the blind or severely disabled. OSDBU will continue to assist the agencies to meet and exceed the small business goals as negotiated with the SBA.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

OSDBU works closely with USDA's senior management and contracting offices and actively assisted in the acquisition process by reviewing all planned acquisitions not already set-aside for small business competition (clearance form) and make recommendations for small business set-aside acquisition strategies and works closely to increase small business competition with large businesses currently contracting with USDA by increased subcontracting guidance.

In support of the OSDBU's mission, hosted and participated in numerous small business events throughout the country in-person and virtually. These events consist of all small businesses interested in working with USDA and the Federal government. This is to provide information and technical assistance as well as a true understanding of contracting with the Federal government. These events may include other Federal agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations, Large Businesses and learning Institutions. OSDBU will continue to host one-on-one meetings and Small Business Events via in-person or virtual. Outreach in OSDBU is vital in respect to meeting/providing information to small businesses pertaining to doing business with USDA. OSDBU utilizes an active outreach program to identify available Small, Small Disadvantaged, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned, HUBZone, and Women-Owned Small Businesses. Plans are in discussions with other Federal agency OSDBU's to partner in outreach events to bring more impact to the small business community.

Due to proposed legislative changes to the AbilityOne Program, USDA will refresh and strengthen visibility as to perspective contracting with non-profits, hiring of persons with disabilities, and recognition of the AbilityOne Program itself.

USDA in partnership with the Small Business Administration and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation serves as hosts of the "Path to Prosperity" Regional Series throughout the country. The three Federal entities are responsible for hosting events featuring experts in the banking and lending industry, Federal Government and community partners and stakeholders. The series provides tools, resources, and the opportunity to engage in discussions intended to create economic progress in rural communities. (provided the partnership agreement has not expired prior to fiscal year 2025).

In 2023 the USDA Deputy Secretary signed a MOU that codified that USDA is strengthening its longstanding partnership with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to create jobs and expand access to new and better market opportunities for people in rural America. Through this MOU, USDA and SBA are committing to increase investments in small and underserved communities to help grow the rural economy and create good-paying jobs for people nationwide. USDA agencies are committed to expanding opportunities for rural technical assistance providers, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and small business owners. They provide resources to help rural businesses compete in both domestic and international markets.

As part of the MOU, the agencies will work together to:

- Provide joint trainings, technical assistance and mentorship opportunities for rural small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Help agricultural producers and small businesses identify ways to export their products around the world.
- Expand collaboration between USDA and SBA's Resource Partners Network.
- Cross-promote programs that support rural businesses and socially disadvantaged communities, and more.

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AGENCY-WIDE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The Office of Property and Environmental Management (OPEM) provides Department-wide administration, leadership, policy, and program oversight in the areas of property, fleet, and environmental management. This includes issuing guidance and policy, managing data, leasing oversight and compliance; real property management; fleet and aviation management; environmental response and restoration; environmental compliance; and sustainable operations for energy and water, sustainable buildings, solid waste and recycling, sustainable acquisition, and electronic stewardship.

Alignment to USDA 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

OPEM contributes to Goals 1 and 6 of the Department’s Strategic Goals in the current 2022 – 2026 USDA Strategic Plan. Departmental KPIs are performance indicators that are aligned to the Strategic Objectives laid out in the USDA’s Strategic Plan.

- Strategic Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America’s Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities
 - Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions).
- Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA
 - Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

A more detailed report of the performance plan can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>. The following table summarizes the results for the Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for which OPEM is responsible.

Table DA-12. KPI-Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Strategic Objective 1.4		Item	Baseline	2024	2025
Greenhouse Gas Reduction	Results		-	-	-
Percent change in Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions ...	Target	482,097 MTCO2E ¹		23%	36%
Fleet Vehicles.....	Results		-	-	-
Total Number of Departmental Fleet Vehicles	Target		-	39.1	N/A ²

¹ The unit MTCO2E for Baseline is Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent. Baseline of 2023 GHG information and targets for 2024 and 2025 are preliminary and are subject to change to align with the White House policy direction.

² This KPI is being retired in 2025.

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions).

USDA plans to increase priority sustainability actions to achieving the 65 percent reduction in scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions goals by 2030 from 2008 levels as required by Executive Order (EO) 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*. These actions will build on past sustainability strategic planning efforts and direction from the USDA Sustainable Operations Council. The actions will focus on purchases of carbon pollution-free electricity and zero-emission vehicles, and on facility energy efficiency improvements.

Table DA-13. KPI-Property Footprint

Strategic Objective 6.3	Item	Baseline	2024	2025
Property Footprint.....	Results	-	-	-
Property Footprint: Reduce the Department's overall real property footprint through effective disposal and consolidation efforts (Million Sq. Feet).....	Target	30.8	30.0	29.6

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

USDA plans to continue to right-size its real property portfolio in alignment with government-wide return to the physical workplace needs and telework/remote work policy. USDA’s real property asset management efforts and related goals are significantly influenced by its desire to achieve an efficient real property portfolio. USDA balances many priorities in its real property management process. The Department seeks to maintain an efficient portfolio in support of USDA’s strategic goals and its desire to have a modern work environment. USDA’s vision for the workplace is one that enables effective mission achievement and quality employee experience that promotes flexibility, sustainability, and safety. The overall goal of space management and utilization is to create a modern workplace, retain and recruit workers, cut costs, and deliver programs and services.

Pre-pandemic and current occupancy data affirm underutilization of assets across the portfolio. USDA’s priority is to reduce rental payments to facilitate investments in modernization. USDA is working closely with the General Service Administration (GSA) to prioritize space optimization in major metropolitan areas where USDA has a large footprint of predominantly office space.

Introduction

At the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), our Mission is to facilitate the attainment of the Department's strategic goals and program objectives by ensuring the recruitment and retention of a diverse, highly skilled, engaged, and motivated workforce that is aligned with our program needs as well as to promote a competency-based and results-oriented performance culture at USDA.

Alignment to USDA 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

OHRM contributes to Goal 6 of the Department’s Strategic Goals in the current 2022 – 2026 USDA Strategic Plan. Departmental KPIs are performance indicators that are aligned to the Strategic Objectives laid out in the USDA’s Strategic Plan.

- Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA
 - Objective 6.1 Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability.

Summary of Performance

A more detailed report of the performance plan can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>. The following table summarizes the results for the Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for which OHRM is responsible.

Table DA-14. KPI-Hiring Time

Strategic Objective 6.1	Baseline	2024	2025	2026
Hiring Time.....	Results	-	-	-
Period of Time (Days) Between Request Hiring Validation Date (SF-52 Approved Date) and New Hire Actual Start Date (Entry on Duty Date) (Percentage hired within 80 days).....	Target	-	60%	60%

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Goal 6.1: Foster a Culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Transparency, and Accountability

USDA will continue to redefine its approach to outreach to increase awareness of USDA openings and career opportunities. In addition to institutions of higher education, affinity groups, and professional organizations and associations, USDA will reach out actively to occupational fields that are experiencing economic impacts such as layoffs, especially in rural America. USDA will also look for opportunities to increase awareness and use of non-competitive hiring authorities for people with disabilities, veterans, military spouses, former Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers, post-secondary students, and college graduates. OHRM, mission areas and staff offices will partner to maximize opportunities for agencies to share hiring certificates, utilize certificates from cross-government hiring actions, and take part in recruitment events. USDA will continue to look for ways to improve the hiring process including identifying tasks which can be performed concurrently vice in a linear process and explore the use of artificial intelligence to automate aspects of the hiring process.

USDA will continue to explore ways that technology can streamline processes, increase applicant and employee experience, and leverage resources to maximize efficiency.

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USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Language in the General Provisions of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act permits agencies funded in the Act to finance the activities of selected Committees that advise them from their own funds, subject to the limitation on total obligations for these Committees.

Provided below is a list of those Committees subject to this spending limitation and their funding levels for 2022 - 2025.

Table DA-15. USDA Advisory Committees with funding levels (in dollars)

Policy Area and Committee Title	2022 Allocation	2023 Allocation	2024 Allocation	2025 Allocation
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services:				
National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Food Safety:				
National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection	60,000	60,000	75,000	75,000
National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods	150,000	150,000	225,000	225,000
Research, Education, and Economics:				
Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Marketing And Regulatory Programs:				
National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
National Poultry Improvement Plan	30,000	30,000	30,000	80,000
Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards	-	60,000	60,000	60,000
National Organic Standards Board	200,000	200,000	250,000	250,000
Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee	100,000	100,000	150,000	150,000
Grain Inspection Advisory Committee	75,000	75,000	125,000	125,000
Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs:				
Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets	10,000	-	-	-
Farm Production and Conservation:				
Agricultural Air Quality Task Force	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production	100,000	175,000	175,000	175,000
Office of Tribal Relations:				
Tribal Advisory Committee	-	251,000	275,000	275,000
Office of Partnerships & Public Engagement:				
Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000
Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers	112,000	112,000	112,000	112,000
USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Total, Advisory Committees	<u>1,503,000</u>	<u>1,879,000</u>	<u>2,143,000</u>	<u>2,143,000</u>
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Contingencies/Reserve	1,317,000	941,000	627,000	627,000
Total, Advisory Committees' Limitation	<u>2,900,000</u>	<u>2,900,000</u>	<u>2,850,000</u>	<u>2,850,000</u>

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STATUS OF PROGRAMS

From 1983 through 1996, a central appropriation provided financial support for all authorized USDA Advisory Committee activities other than those included in the Forest Service and those financed from user fees. Beginning in 1997, language in the General Provisions of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act permits agencies funded in the Act to finance the activities of selected committees that advise them from their own funds, subject to a Department-wide limitation on expenditures for those committees. The statuses of these programs provide information on the activities of Committees during 2023.

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services***National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition (Council)***

The Council studies the operation of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and related programs such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The Council includes representatives of Federal, State, and local governments, the medical field, industry, WIC and CSFP parent participants, and advocacy groups. The Council's expenses are unique to include the cost of lost wages and childcare for parent members.

Food Safety***National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI)***

The National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI) was established, under statutory authority in 1971, to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on matters concerning meat, poultry, and processed egg products inspection; food safety; and other matters that fall within the scope of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act.

The NACMPI Committee is composed of members from academia, industry, State and local government officials, public health organizations, consumers, and consumer organizations.

Accomplishments during 2023 include:

- Public Plenary Meeting was held June 21-22, 2023, to introduce new NACMPI Committee members, provide FSIS updates on 2021 NACMPI recommendations, and issue a new work charge to the Committee;
- FSIS provided updates to the 2021 recommendations “Not Ready-to-Eat Breaded Stuffed Poultry Products” and “Custom and Retail Exemptions from Federal Inspection;”
- FSIS presented the new work charge “Enhancing FSIS Efforts to Provide Outreach and Resources to Promote Equal Access to Inspection Service for Underserved Communities;”
- Two open Subcommittee Group Meetings (Group A - Outreach to prospective applicants for FSIS inspection, Group B - Assistance to businesses currently under FSIS inspection) were held for the new work charge on June 21 and 22, 2023;
- Public Plenary Meeting was held on June 22, 2023, to receive and consider adoption of the Subcommittee reports on the FSIS work charge “Enhancing FSIS Efforts to Provide Outreach and Resources to Promote Equal Access to Inspection Service for Underserved Communities;” and
- Subcommittee Reports on the FSIS work charges “Enhancing FSIS Efforts to Provide Outreach and Resources to Promote Equal Access to Inspection Service for Underserved Communities” were adopted.

NACMPI meeting minutes, transcripts and final reports can be viewed on the NACMPI website at:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/policy/advisory-committees/national-advisory-committee-meat-and-poultry-inspection-nacmpi>

National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF)

The NACMCF is a discretionary Advisory Committee that was established in 1988 by the Secretary of Agriculture after consulting with the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services. FSIS, the Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Department of Defense participate in directing the work of this Committee and all benefit from Committee advice. The activities of NACMCF are carried

out, in part, by Subcommittees that are focused on specific areas being considered by the full Committee. NACMCF reports provide current information and scientific advice to Federal food safety agencies and serve as a foundation for regulations and programs aimed at reducing foodborne disease and enhancing public health.

Accomplishments during 2023 include:

- Nominations to serve on the NACMCF were solicited between February 6 – April 17, 2023, with appointments expected to be made in early 2024.
- The Committee adopted the report, “Response to Questions Posed by the FSIS: Enhancing Salmonella Control in Poultry Products” at a virtual Plenary meeting held on November 15, 2022, and the finalized report posted on the FSIS website April 4, 2023.
- The Committee held an in-person Plenary meeting on May 16, 2023, to provide updates on the “Cyclospora cayetanensis in Produce” and “Cronobacter spp. in Powdered Infant Formula” charges.
- The Subcommittees held in-person meetings on May 16, 17, and 18, 2023, to continue work on the “Cyclospora cayetanensis in Produce” and “Cronobacter spp. in Powdered Infant Formula” charges.
- The Committee will hold a virtual Plenary meeting on August 30, 2023, to vote on adopting the “Cyclospora cayetanensis in Produce” report and to provide an update on the response to the first question of the “Cronobacter spp. in Powdered Infant Formula” charge.

Research, Education, and Economics

Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics was established under agency authority on July 16, 1962, in the Department of Commerce, and was chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2, in January 1973. This Committee was moved to USDA in 1997 when responsibility for the Census of Agriculture transferred from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). It makes recommendations on the conduct of the periodic censuses and surveys of agriculture, other related surveys, and the types of agricultural information obtained from respondents. The Committee also advises on the content and frequency of agricultural reports.

The Committee is composed of 22 members with professional knowledge regarding the data needs of the food, fiber, and rural sector. It provides a direct link with the major agricultural organizations and farm groups which could not be as effectively or efficiently obtained from any other source. The Committee is the primary forum for reconciling the divergent data needs between data user and provider groups. It is also instrumental in helping NASS provide the maximum value from their statistics, within available funding, and to continually improve its products and services. The charter expired on September 22, 2023. NASS plans to seek re-establishment of the committee in 2024. The committee did not meet during 2023, and the next committee meeting is anticipated in the Spring of 2024.

For more information on the proceedings of the meeting, please see the following website:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/index.php

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC)

The Committee is established under agency authority to support the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Service’s (WS) program, which operates under the Agriculture Act of March 2, 1931 (commonly known as the “Animal Damage Control Act” or “ADCA”), 7 U.S.C. §§8351-8354, amended by Pub. L. 115-270, October 23, 2018, 132 Stat 3765. The purpose of the NWSAC is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on policies and program issues necessary to manage damage caused by depredating wildlife to protect America’s agricultural, industrial, and natural resources, and to safeguard public health and safety.

The Committee’s memberships are composed of 20 persons representing a broad spectrum of agricultural, environmental, conservation, academic, animal welfare, and related interests. In this fiscal year, the Agency solicited nominations for Committee members, as the previous appointments had expired. Nominees were vetted in September and a nomination package is currently being prepared for the Secretary.

Recommendations and more information on the NWSAC may be found at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/programs/CT_NWSAC

General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan

The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), started in 1935, is a successful Federal-State-industry cooperative program for controlling specific poultry diseases in the United States. The U.S. commercial poultry industry is an approximately \$40 billion industry. The Plan allows the application of new technology to improve poultry and poultry products throughout the country. The NPIP is governed by the General Conference Committee, the Official Federal Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Agriculture on poultry health. Recommendations are made at the National Biennial Conferences (held every other year) by official delegates representing participating flock owners, breeders, and hatchery owners from all cooperating States and territories, in accordance with title 9, Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) Part 147, Subpart E. The GCC can, on a limited basis, make an interim approval of a change until the change is published in the Federal Register. In 2023, the General Conference Committee met in Columbus, OH, on June 29, 2023. Four interim proposed changes were approved, to update language for defining NPIP-equivalency and for allowing the use of virtual technology for inspections.

Accomplishments of the NPIP-GCC for 2023 at the General Conference Committee Meeting:

- Approved and accepted the 2022 minutes as written; and
- Offered presentations on Mycoplasma, Salmonella and Avian Influenza.

Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards

In 1923, the U.S. Cotton Standards Act (U.S. Code Title 7, Chapter 2) was passed to establish and promote the use of the official cotton standards of the United States in interstate and foreign commerce. The Universal Cotton Standards Agreement was established in 1923 under the U.S. Cotton Standards Act (U.S. Code Title 7, Chapter 2, Section 57a) to provide for the use of the Universal standards of Grades for American Upland cotton for the marketing of American Upland cotton. In 1924, a supplemental agreement was made to hold regular cotton standards conferences to examine and approve the practical forms of the Universal Standards. Under this agreement, the foreign cotton associations involved were given the authority to recommend, review and approve proposed changes to the official standards. In 1989, the Universal Cotton Standards Agreement (Sec. X) was revised to require an Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and composed of both domestic and foreign industry representatives. The Secretary of Agriculture reestablishes Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards in accordance with provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. 10.

Accomplishments:

- This Committee was reestablished in June 2023; conducted outreach to solicit for nominations for memberships and anticipate seating members in 2024.

National Organic Standards Board

Title XXI of the 1990 Farm Bill, known as the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), established the National Organic Program (NOP), a USDA program responsible for implementing and enforcing organic standards and facilitating the work of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), an Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Agriculture. The OFPA requires that the NOSB be composed of members, representing the following categories: Four individuals who own or operate an organic farming operation, or employees of such individuals; Two individuals who own or operate an organic handling operation, or employees of such individuals; One individual who owns or operates a retail establishment with significant trade in organic products, or employees of such individuals; Three individuals with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation; Three individuals who represent public interest or consumer interest groups; One individual with expertise in the fields of toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry; One individual who is a USDA certifying agent. Members come from all four U.S. regions and serve staggered five-year terms.

The NOSB charter was renewed and approved in June 2022 for a period of two years. The NOSB has sole authority granted through OFPA to recommend additions to or deletions from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The NOSB drafts recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture based on needs of the industry, with input from both industry and the public. The Board's main functions are to review each substance on the National

List every 5 years (called sunset review), make recommendations about whether a substance should be allowed or prohibited in organic production or handling, assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production, and advise the Secretary on other aspects of implementation OFPA and the NOP regulations.

In 2023 the NOP published a call for nominations to fill two (2) vacancies beginning in January 2023. One new appointee replaced a member who completed their service in January 2023, and the second appointee replaced a member who resigned early.

The NOSB met twice in fiscal year 2023: in October 2022 and April 2023. Both meetings were held as hybrid meetings (in person and livestreamed). At each meeting the NOSB discussed substances used in organic crop, livestock, and handling/processing production, as well as organic standards and procedures that impact the entire organic community. Prior to the public meetings, the NOSB received and analyzed a total of approximately 2,990 written comments and listened to oral testimony from 160 stakeholders. During the public meetings, the NOSB heard updates from the National Organic Program (NOP) about its activities and hosted several guest speakers who provided updates on the State of Organic Seed, the status of the USDA's 2019 Organic Survey, and an update on the Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). The NOSB also discussed its large quantity of agenda items and voted on recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. In 2023 the NOSB made a total of 12 formal recommendations to Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture, via the National Organic Program. The recommendations are posted on the AMS/NOP/NOSB website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/nosb/recommendations>.

Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee

The Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (Committee) is established under Departmental Regulation 1042-139. The Committee comprises members of the fruit and vegetable industry who represent the following sectors: growers, packers, and shippers; wholesalers and distributors; retailers and restaurateurs; State Department of Agriculture leadership; trade association and organization executives; processors; importers and exporters; foodservice suppliers and brokers; organic producers; and farmer's market and food hub representatives. The Committee represents a balanced diversity of views regarding the many fruit and vegetable industry interests. The Committee's purpose and responsibility is to research, review, and develop recommendations to the Secretary on issues facing the industry as a whole, as well as ways the USDA can tailor its programs and services to better meet stakeholder needs. The Committee usually meets an average of twice per fiscal year.

In fiscal year 2023, the Committee held a total of three public meetings and 14 Subcommittee meetings. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service submitted two charges (issues) for the advisory members to evaluate in hopes of USDA receiving industry feedback on modernizing specialty crops Market News data processes and report and feedback on the use of advanced technology for remote inspection and grading services. USDA anticipates receiving final recommendations pertaining to the charges in early 2024.

The Committee charter was reestablished on May 23, 2022. The Secretary appointed representatives to the Committee on October 28, 2022. The industry representatives will serve a two-year term, ending on October 28, 2024. The Committee intends to hold a virtual half-day public meeting in 2024. The full committee sessions, meeting minutes and documents may be found <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/facas-advisory-councils/fviac>.

Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (GIAC)

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was established under section 21 of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) on September 29, 1981. The Advisory Committee is charged with advising the Secretary on implementing the USGSA and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, or more simply, on implementing AMS's grain inspection and weighing programs. The Advisory Committee is comprised of members who represent all segments of the U.S. grain industry, including producers, processors, handlers, exporters, grain inspection agencies, and scientists related to the policies in the USGSA (7 U.S.C. 71-87k).

The Advisory Committee advises the Secretary on various important issues affecting AMS operations and the official grain inspection and weighing system delivery during biannual meetings.

In fiscal year 2023, the Advisory Committee held two public meetings. On December 14-15, 2022, the Advisory Committee held a hybrid meeting with the in-person portion of the meeting taking place in Kansas City, Missouri.

Meeting minutes, recommendations, and other meeting documents can be found <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/giac-dec-2022-meeting>.

On August 30-31, 2023, the Advisory Committee held a hybrid meeting with the in-person portion of the meeting taking place in Kansas City, Missouri. Meeting minutes, recommendations, and other meeting documents will be able to be found <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/giac-aug-2023-meeting>. At the time of the deadline for accomplishments, all documents have yet to be posted.

Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade (APAC) and Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade (ATAC)

Pursuant to Departmental Regulation 1042-68, USDA currently administers the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade (APAC) and six Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade (ATAC): (1) Animals and Animal Products; (2) Fruits and Vegetables; (3) Grains, Feed, Oilseeds and Planting Seeds; (4) Processed Foods; (5) Sweeteners and Sweetener Products; and (6) Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Hemp. The APAC and the ATACs are jointly administered by the USDA and the United States Trade Representative (USTR). The APAC and ATACs are authorized by sections 135(c)(1) and (2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (Pub. L. No. 93-618, 19 U.S.C. 2155). Congress established these Committees to ensure that trade policy (including trade negotiating) objectives adequately reflect private-sector U.S. commercial and economic interests. The Committees provide a formal mechanism to ensure engagement between the Federal Government and the private sector regarding international agricultural trade matters. The APAC and ATACs members are essential to advancing the Administration's trade agenda to liberalize agricultural trade, expand access to U.S. food and agricultural products in overseas markets, and reduce unfair competition. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture and USTR. All Committee members have demonstrated leadership qualities, commodity expertise, and knowledge of the effects that various trade barriers, or the absence of trade barriers, have on the commodities they represent. All members are recognized leaders in their field and can represent those interests fairly.

In 2023, a plenary meeting was held with the agricultural trade advisors to highlight the Administration's agricultural trade priorities and take industry questions. Principals stressed the importance of climate-smart agriculture, a worker-centered trade policy, and collaboration between USDA and USTR. Highlighted was the importance of trade and the disparity in benefits and income realized within the farming community and efforts were discussed on trade with Japan, Taiwan, Kenya, and the E.U., the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) negotiations, and the United States-Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The 2023 recruitment process started with Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) initiating more diverse outreach activities by sending announcements to underrepresented groups to ensure various groups were aware of the opportunity to apply for membership on the APAC/ATACs. Our 2023 intake resulted in 75 APAC/ATAC members being reappointed and 52 new members being appointed. After the intake, Committee membership increased from 190 to 199 members. Female representation on the APAC/ATACs is 27 percent in 2023, compared to 24 percent in 2022. Minority representation on the Committees is 13 percent in 2023, compared to nine percent in 2022.

In June 2023, FAS initiated the rechartering of the Committees, including a name change for one of the Committees. The Tobacco, Cotton, and Peanuts (TCP) changed to Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Hemp. Including Hemp on this Committee broadens the scope of the Committee and benefits stakeholders in this commodity. In September 2023, FAS held an introductory webinar for new members.

Farm Production and Conservation

Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF or the Task Force)

The USDA Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality Research was created in accordance with Section 391 of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to agricultural air quality. In 1996, Congress found that various studies alleged that agriculture is a source of Particulate Matter emissions and that many of these studies have often been based on erroneous data. Congress also cited ongoing research by USDA and declared that Federal policy in regard to air pollution be based on sound scientific findings that are subject to adequate peer review and consider economic feasibility. The Task Force's mandate is to strengthen and coordinate USDA's air quality research effort and identify cost effective ways for the agriculture industry to improve air quality and meet Federal and local air quality emissions requirements. The Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service chairs the Task Force. The Task Force membership consists

of leaders in farming, industry, health, and science. The Task Force also includes representatives from USDA's Forest Service, Agricultural Research Service, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The Task Force charter was renewed on February 2, 2023. Previous membership terms expired in January 2023. USDA conducted a membership solicitation and is currently reviewing the nomination applications for Secretary selection. It is anticipated that selection of the membership will occur in 2024, with 1-2 meetings held in 2024.

Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

The Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee (UAIPAC) was established in accordance to section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), Public Law 115–334, 7 U.S.C. § 6923(b)(1) to advise the Director of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production within NRCS and the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices; and any other aspects of the implementation of that section of the Farm Bill. The UAIPAC charter was established in January 2021. Pursuant to the direction of Congress at 7 U.S.C. § 6923(b)(4)(A), the Committee plans to meet not fewer than three times per year.

2023 Accomplishments:

In 2023, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) solicited for nominations in anticipation of four vacancies in January 2024. More than 80 applications were received from highly qualified individuals including 4 applications from the current members requesting to be reappointed by the Secretary after serving a two-year term. Public meetings took place in November 2022, February 2023, April 2023, and August 2023, totally over 5,000 registered general public attendees and stakeholders representing the urban agriculture and innovative production community nationwide. Following the August 2023 public meeting the Committee was able to conclude their deliberations for their first 14 recommendations to submit to the Secretary and multiple Congressional Committees.

Office of Tribal Relations

Tribal Advisory Committee

The Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) is pursuant to Section 12303 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (7 U.S.C. 6921(b) and will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. 10. The objective and scope of the TAC is to provide advice and guidance to the Secretary on matters relating to Tribal and Indian affairs. The Committee facilitates but does not supplant government-to-government consultation between the Department of Agriculture and Indian tribes.

The Secretary established the Tribal Advisory Committee in July 2023. The TAC solicitation for nominations concluded August 14, 2023. Recognizing the joint appointment structure by the Secretary and leadership from three Congressional committees required by the 2018 Farm Bill, OTR collaborated with Office of General Counsel, Office of Civil Rights, and the White House Liaison Office in engaging the Hill on their prospective appointments. USDA plans to co-appoint members and hold its first meeting in 2024.

Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

Minority Farmer Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers' ("the Committee") charter was established pursuant to section 14008 of the Food Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Pub. L. 110-246, 122 Stat. 1651, 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2279). The charter will be up for renewal in August 2024.

The Committee's overarching purpose is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on:

- The implementation of section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279).
- Methods of maximizing the participation of minority farmers and ranchers in U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.
- Civil rights activities within the Department, as such activities relate to participants in such programs.

This Committee is advisory and, as such, its work requires that members meet regularly to explore current USDA policies, programs, and guidance affecting minority farming communities. The Committee is required to deliberate and come up with recommendations that: (1) directly impact how the Department engages minority farming communities; (2) result in the creation or of policies or guidelines that enhance service delivery and increase

minority participation in USDA programs and eliminate those that pose barriers; (3) improve program delivery by shoring up and expanding the Department’s communications and outreach efforts; and (4) examine and respond to stakeholders’ experiences and perspectives when dealing with the USDA, particularly the experiences of our minority farmers and ranchers.

This Committee was able to meet for the first time in person twice this fiscal year (March and June 2023) propounding a solid set of recommendations for the Secretary’s consideration. The Committee engaged multiple entities (e.g., Office of the Secretary – OSEC; Office of Partnership and Public Engagement – OPPE; Advisor on Racial Equity, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Agricultural Marketing Service) seeking to understanding the challenges these offices and agencies face *vis-à-vis* serving our minority farmers and ranchers. The members’ terms expired *en masse* on July 8, 2023. More than half the members have reapplied for an additional term.

A nominations package with fifteen candidates recommended for membership (and fifteen ‘next favored’ candidates) from among which the Secretary will make appointments for the next cohort of the Committee.

OPPE will engage with OSEC to review the existing charge for the Committee’s next 2 years and expand as appropriate. There are also plans to focus the Committee’s subcommittees next term on several matters of import that impact affect minority farmers and ranchers and the entities that support them.

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (“the Committee”) is authorized pursuant to Section 5 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992. The Committee’s purpose is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on ways to develop programs that assist new farmers and ranchers by providing new opportunities. This Committee has been on hiatus for the last 2 years with its most recent public meeting occurred in June 2021.

This Committee’s primary focus has been to identify challenges and issues that new farmers and ranchers face when seeking to become a sustainable producer. Their primary duty is to develop recommendations that may help address these challenges and bring down the issues or barriers to building a successful business. The Committee will engage with various USDA agencies and offices—assisting the members with reconciling what is needed for the new farmer or rancher with what the Department may or may not be able to. In this way, the Committee can build recommendations that may be effectively implemented by the Secretary. The Committee’s prior work centered around four pillars: (1) Land Access – purchasing and leasing land; (2) Capital - borrower/lender expectations; (3) Information – Beginning Farmer and Rancher coordinators, communication, and data; and (4) Transition - eligibility and qualifications, barriers, incentive lease agreements, senior and junior member goals, and transition versus sale.

The Committee’s charter was renewed in August 2023, and a group of eighty-six applicants are being vetted and the expectation is that a new Committee will be appointed and in place by or before January 2024.

USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

The USDA/HACU Leadership Group serves as an advisory body to provide guidance and direction to USDA on matters of mutual benefit emanating from USDA/HACU partnership initiatives. This body consists of an equal number of members from USDA and HACU-member institutions and has the responsibility to make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the President of HACU. The Secretary of Agriculture appoints a Co-Chairperson of the USDA/HACU Leadership Group and all the USDA members. The President of HACU nominates a Co-Chairperson of the USDA/HACU Leadership Group and all the HACU members for secretarial approval. This partnership provides a cooperative framework for the parties to develop and maintain a USDA Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) agenda that helps Hispanic Americans achieve education excellence and to contribute to the fulfillment of the USDA mission. This collaborative agenda is focused on promoting agriculture, food and environmental sciences, and other agriculture-related careers for students attending HSIs and HSACUs. Other focal areas address increasing employment opportunities in USDA for students attending HACU-member institutions and supporting capacity enhancement of HACU-member institutions and their faculty.

On September 21, 2023, USDA’s Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement hosted a half-day Symposium on Federal Programs and Resources for Hispanic Serving Institutions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFDYcKyGOCg> with an emphasis on cooperative agreements. The HSI community and partnering stakeholders learned how USDA supports students, staff, and faculty through cooperative

agreements at various agencies within the Department. USDA leaders, program officers and project coordinators also described specific federal funding resources to help HSIs expand cooperative partnerships and collaborations with USDA. This resulted in the attendance of 278 HSI staff, faculty, and administrative representatives from across the country.

Table DA-16. Authority and Composition of USDA Advisory Committees

Committee Title	Agency	Authority Statutory (S) or Discretionary (D)	Committee Membership
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services:			
National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition ...	FNS	(S) 42 U.S.C. 1786	24
Food Safety:			
National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection	FSIS	(S) 21 U.S.C. 454a-4	0
National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods	FSIS	(D) Discretionary under FACA	30
Research, Education, And Economics:			
Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics.....	NASS	Departmental Regulation 1042-130	22
Marketing And Regulatory Programs:			
National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee	APHIS	(D) Discretionary under FACA	20
Gen. Conf. Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan	APHIS	(D) Discretionary under FACA	7
Advisory Committee on Universal Cotton Standards	AMS	(D) 5 U.S.C. 10; 7 U.S.C. 51 et seq	24
National Organic Standards Board	AMS	(S) 7 U.S.C. 6518	15
Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee	AMS	(D) Discretionary under FACA	25
Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.....	AMS	(S) P. L. 103-156 7 U.S.C. 87i	15
Trade And Foreign Agricultural Affairs:			
Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade.....	FAS	(S) P.L. 93–618	36
Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade	FAS	(D) P.L.93–618/ Dept Reg 1042-68	122
Farm Production and Conservation:			
Agricultural Air Quality Task Force	NRCS	(S) 7 U.S.C. 5405	Unlimited
Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production	NRCS	(S) 7 U.S.C. § 6923(b)(1)	12
Office Of Tribal Relations:			
Tribal Advisory Committee.....	OTR	(S) 7 U.S.C. 6921(b)	11
Departmental Management:			
Minority Farmer Advisory Committee.....	OPPE	(S) 7 CFR U.S.C 2279	15
Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.....	OPPE	(S) 7 U.S.C. 1929	20
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Leadership Group	OPPE	(D) Memor of Agmt dated 10/96	8