

Frequently Asked Questions About the USDA Digital Service

What does the USDA Digital Service Do?

The USDA Digital Service connects key talent, expertise, and perspectives across the USDA enterprise and tech communities in the Federal, public, and private sectors to find the best solutions for service delivery challenges across USDA. The Digital Service works alongside [USDA Mission Areas](#) and [USDA Agencies](#) to understand these challenges and to help design and deliver user-centric solutions across policy, tech, people and process. The USDA Digital Service disseminates best practices across USDA to build and sustain a collaborative community of human-centered technologists and to recognize, develop, and elevate the individuals across USDA who are striving to deliver meaningful impact in U.S. Agriculture.

What are the Strategic Goals of the USDA Digital Service?

The U.S. Digital Service has 3 primary goals. First, the Digital Service aims to create a community of collaborative, highly skilled technical talent that can be deployed across the agency to meet key challenges. Second, the Digital Service aims to serve as a catalyst for USDA to meet its missions to support American agriculture and to help feed the world. And third, the Digital Service aims to set the direction and priorities for the IT Workforce regarding recruitment, training and development, retention, and workforce planning.

What are the Digital Service's Mission, Vision, and Values?

The Digital Service's mission, vision, and values align with those found within the [USDA's 2022-2026 IT Strategic Plan](#). Our mission and vision are to make it as easy and effective as possible for USDA to tap tech talent to shape solutions that provide great experiences to all the people USDA serves. Our values can be found in our guiding principles, designed to deliver a better experience for USDA stakeholders:

- **People First** – Our top priority is understanding our customers, stakeholders, agency partners, and team-members, and how we can best meet their needs and work together, so the missions of USDA are successful.
- **Plain Language** - While many of our challenges are technically complex, we will always work to communicate and collaborate with the many diverse stakeholders that drive the USDA mission in a way that is easy for everyone to understand and engage in.
- **Enterprise-Focused** - The tools and techniques we develop will be created and sustained in a way that can be accessible and provide benefit across the Department, delivering efficiencies and cost savings.
- **Collaboration Always** - The best solutions aren't created in a vacuum. The USDA Digital Service will be partners with USDA agencies and end users, meeting them where they are and empowering them with the support, they need to be successful.

Where is the Digital Service located within USDA?

The Digital Service is located within USDA's [Office of the Chief Information Officer \(OCIO\)](#), which develops and provides information technology needs for USDA's mission areas and agencies.

What is the Digital Service Fellowship Program?

The Digital Service Fellowship Program is a fellowship for technology, customer experience, and digital services talent at USDA. Fellows are brought in on a rolling basis and serve an initial two-year tour-of-duty service, with an option to extend their fellowship by one service-term for an additional two-year period. Fellows will be hired into either the USDA Digital Service, or to USDA's Office of Customer Experience (OCX). Some fellows may work full time in the Digital Service office or within OCX, while others may be detailed to work on projects with other USDA agencies and mission areas.

What roles are available to Digital Service Fellows?

Fellows will be hired into 1 of 3 tracks: 1) Digital Services Expert, 2) Customer Experience (CX) Strategist, or 3) Procurement Strategist. Positions are classified for these roles at the GS-15 level. You can look up the total salary amount based on grade level and locality pay by going to the Office of Personnel Management's official website on the General Schedule: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2023/general-schedule/>. For example, if a Fellow was appointed in the Washington DC area in 2023, the salary range would be between \$155,700 to \$183,500, not exceed an annual rate of \$183,500.

What projects is the Digital Service currently working on?

The Digital Service team is working on several different initiatives at any given time. An example of some of our current efforts include:

- USDA's High Impact Service Providers aligned with the [Executive Order on Transforming Federal customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#) (Customer Experience Executive Order):
 - USDA houses 5 key High Impact Service Providers that are being tracked as part of the Customer Experience Executive Order and the President's Management Agenda. These services cover critical programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), applying for farm loan assistance, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and more. These services provide critical benefits and services to millions of people and our planet and are part of [USDA's Mission and Vision](#).
- Enabling Digitization of USDA
 - Alignment with the Office of the Chief Information Officer's Strategic goals for leading USDA's IT efforts to accelerate digital transformation within the agency and across multiple platforms. Through this work we aim to achieve redundancies, cross-pollination of processes and systems, and increased partnerships.
- Strategic IT Recruitment Efforts
 - Creating and enhancing career pathways that strengthen the IT workforce, including strategic workforce planning, development, job analysis, career ladder building and more which impact improving customer experience, digital modernization across multiple programs and mission areas, and increasing diversification of the technical talent pipeline.

How do I contact the Digital Service team?

The Digital Service team can be reached at USDADigitalService@usda.gov.