

2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Budget for the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the “Budget” is in regard to the 2024 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 2021 and 2022, enacted levels for 2023, and the President’s Budget request for 2024. Amounts for 2023 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 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 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

AGENCY-WIDE**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) was established through a Secretarial memorandum and codified in the 2018 Farm Bill. The purpose of OPPE is to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and improve agency collaboration. The office was delegated oversight of the following:

- 2501 Program
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center
- Education Initiatives
- Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison
- Women in Agriculture initiative
- USDA Youth Programs and Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator
- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders
- Farmworker Coordinator

OPPE provides strategic outreach and coordination across USDA agencies in addition to working with Departmental stakeholders. OPPE’s outreach efforts serve as the primary mechanism by which end users of USDA’s programs are provided information and technical assistance. In addition to the above requirements of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE will continue the oversight of third-party internship programs, such as:

- Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship Program

OPPE continues to support and coordinate outreach and technical assistance for rural and historically underserved communities to improve access to USDA’s programs and services in an equitable manner.

OPPE is located in Washington, D. C. As of September 30, 2022, OPPE’s staff was comprised of 37 full-time permanent employees, including 14 located in Washington, D. C. and 23 located in the field.

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

OPPE did not have any Office of Inspector General or Government Accountability Office evaluation reports during the past year.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**Table OPPE-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$7,002	8	\$7,044	8	\$9,280	12	\$10,357	14
Mandatory Appropriations.....	20,000	4	22,000	-	27,000	4	25,000	4
Total Available	27,002	12	29,044	8	36,280	16	35,357	18
Lapsing Balances	-3,035	-	-62	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	23,967	12	26,982	8	36,280	16	35,357	18
Other Funding:								
Agency Partnership Outreach	6,178	31	6,744	33	7,500	35	7,500	35
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network	1,833	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Advisory Committee.....	112	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thurgood Marshall College Fund.....	750	-	675	-	-	-	-	-
Other OPPE Reimbursables.....	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriations, Other Funding .	9,373	33	7,419	33	7,500	35	7,500	35
Total Obligations, OPPE.....	33,340	45	34,401	41	43,780	51	42,857	53

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs**Table OPPE-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	2021			2022			2023			2024		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
SES	2	-	2	2	-	2	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-15.....	5	-	5	4	-	4	5	-	5	6	-	6
GS-14.....	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	4	3	1	4
GS-13.....	6	19	25	5	17	22	7	21	28	7	22	29
GS-12.....	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
GS-11.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-9.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-7.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-5.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
Total Perm. FT EOY	24	21	45	22	19	41	28	23	51	29	24	53
FTE	24	21	41	22	19	41	28	23	51	29	24	53

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS**Table OPPE-3. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)**

Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Ask USDA Contact Center.....	-	-	\$4	\$4
Material Management Service.....	\$4	\$7	7	7
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	10	18	12	12
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	2	2	4	4
Procurement Operations Services.....	3	4	5	8
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	1	1	1	1
Subtotal.....	20	32	33	36
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	6	63	40	68
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center	15	13	12	13
Financial Management Systems	139	136	133	140
Internal Control Support Services.....	-	-	7	8
Financial Management Support Services.....	398	417	395	415
Subtotal.....	552	566	547	576
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	354	297	225	241

Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
Department Administration Information Technology Office.....	29	34	26	27
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	3	4	3	3
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	-	-	14	14
Enterprise Network Services	32	33	31	28
Subtotal.....	418	368	299	313
Correspondence Management Services	-	1	1	1
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	3	-	27	28
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	999	1,030	947	1,022
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	3	4	3	3
Agency Partnership Outreach	1	1	1	1
Medical Services.....	3	2	2	2
Office of Customer Experience	1	1	-	-
Security Detail	1	1	1	1
Security Operations Program	1	1	1	1
TARGET Center NCR Interpreting Services.....	-	-	1	1
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	1	1	-	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	11	11	9	9
E-Gov:				
E-Rulemaking.....	3	11	2	2
Grants.gov	10	-	6	6
Total, E-Gov	13	11	8	8
Agency Total	1,023	1,052	964	1,039

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

Salaries and Expenses

Office of the Secretary

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$65,067,000~~]~~\$112,634,000~~, of which not to exceed [~~\$7,423,000~~]~~\$34,713,000~~ shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed [~~\$1,396,000~~]~~\$2,396,000~~ shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed [~~\$5,190,000~~]~~\$6,533,000~~ shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations, of which \$1,000,000 shall be to establish 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 [~~\$9,280,000~~]~~\$10,357,000~~ 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; [~~\$28,422,000~~]~~\$37,369,000~~ shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$26,716,000~~]~~\$35,627,000~~ 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: *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 [~~\$4,609,000~~]~~\$4,727,000~~ 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 [~~\$8,738,000~~]~~\$16,539,000~~ 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 may be transferred to the Farm Service Agency to carry out section 729 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 the 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

This change adds language for the transfer of funds for Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach and authorizes the Secretary to transfer funds to Farm Service Agency to carry out section 729 of title VII of this Act.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table OPPE-4. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2023	\$9,280,000
Change in Appropriation	+ 1,077,000
Budget Estimate, 2024	<u>10,357,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table OPPE-5. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2021		2022		2023		2024		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Chg Dec. Key
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE		
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement	\$6,002	6	\$7,044	8	\$9,280	12	\$10,357	14	+\$1,077	+2 (1)
Office of Tribal Relations	1,000	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	<u>7,002</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7,044</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9,280</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10,357</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>+1,077</u>	<u>+2</u>
Mandatory Appropriations:										
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program.....	17,500	4	20,000	-	25,000	4	25,000	4	-	-
GP - Farming Opportunities and Training Outreach.....	2,500	-	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-2,000	- (2)
Subtotal.....	<u>20,000</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>22,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27,000</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>-2,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Adjusted Appropriations	<u>27,002</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>29,044</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>36,280</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>35,357</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-923</u>	<u>+2</u>
Transfers Out:										
Working Capital	-	-	-678	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration	-998	-	-1,140	-	-1,425	-	-	-	+1,425	-
Total Available	<u>26,004</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>27,226</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>34,855</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>35,357</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-923</u>	<u>+2</u>
Lapsing Balances.....	-3,035	-	-62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	<u>22,969</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>27,164</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>34,855</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>35,357</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>+502</u>	<u>+2</u>

Table OPPE-6. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2021		2022		2023		2024		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE		
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement										
	\$3,025	6	\$6,982	8	\$9,280	12	\$10,357	14	+\$1,077	+2
Office of Tribal Relations										
	942	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations										
	3,967	8	6,982	8	9,280	12	10,357	14	+1,077	+2
Mandatory Obligations:										
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program.....										
	16,502	4	18,182	-	23,575	4	25,000	4	+1,425	-
GP - Farming Opportunities and Training Outreach.....										
	2,500	-	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-2,000	-
Subtotal Mandatory Obligations.....										
	19,002	4	20,182	-	25,575	4	25,000	4	-575	-
Total Obligations										
	22,969	12	27,164	8	34,855	16	35,357	18	+2,657	+2
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances.....										
	3,035	-	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available										
	26,004	12	27,226	8	34,855	16	35,357	18	+2,657	+2
Total Transfers In										
	-20,000	-	-22,000	-	-25,000	-	-25,000	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....										
	-	-	678	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration										
	998	-	1,140	-	1,425	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriations.....										
	7,002	12	7,044	8	11,280	16	10,357	18	+1,232	+2

Office of Partnership and Public Engagement

(1) An increase of \$1,077,000 and 2 FTEs (\$9,280,000 and 12 FTEs available in 2023).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

A) An increase of \$77,000 for Pay.

This increase will support the annualization of the 2023 4. 6 percent Cost of Living pay increase and the 2024 5. 2 percent Cost of Living pay increase. If this funding is not provided, the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement would not be able to fund approximately 3 FTEs and/or would need to significantly cut travel, training, and mission support. Failure to receive this increase would prevent the agency from fully performing its mission, which is necessary to ensure continued financial management and stewardship of financial resources for the Department.

B) An increase of \$1,000,000 and 2 FTEs for pay and employee costs in the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement.

This funding will help develop general technical assistance capabilities for partner organizations so that the Department can more effectively serve disadvantaged communities and expand participation in and results from USDA programs. Another key aspect of this proposal will be the development of a technical assistance training curriculum for these partner organizations. Through the implementation of this training, the Department intends to establish a certification program for employees of partner organizations through which those employees will be trained on the assistance programs offered by the Department. These funds will also be leveraged with the available funding for the existing 2501 Program that provides outreach and assistance to organizations that support socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers. Together, the TA training program and the capacity development actions supported with these funds and the 2501 program will significantly expand the Department’s outreach to underserved communities and effectiveness with which we deliver programs to disadvantaged populations.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**Table OPPE-7. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTE (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

State/Territory/Country	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
District of Columbia	\$3,967	8	\$6,982	8	\$9,280	12	\$12,357	14
Lapsing Balances	3,035	-	62	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	7,002	8	7,044	8	9,280	12	12,357	14

Table OPPE-8. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Enacted	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Alabama.....	\$500	-	\$500	-	\$550	-	\$600	-
Alaska.....	150	-	150	-	150	-	200	-
Arizona.....	150	-	150	-	150	-	200	-
Arkansas.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
California.....	216	-	216	-	216	-	250	-
Colorado.....	250	-	250	-	250	-	300	-
Delaware.....	300	-	300	-	300	-	350	-
District of Columbia.....	7,862	4	10,220	4	14,885	4	14,900	4
Florida.....	620	-	620	-	620	-	750	-
Georgia.....	250	-	250	-	250	-	300	-
Idaho.....	150	-	150	-	150	-	200	-
Illinois.....	100	-	100	-	100	-	150	-
Kentucky.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
Louisiana.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
Maryland.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
Michigan.....	100	-	100	-	100	-	100	-
Minnesota.....	400	-	400	-	400	-	400	-
Mississippi.....	900	-	900	-	900	-	1,000	-
Missouri.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
Montana.....	240	-	240	-	240	-	300	-
New Mexico.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
New York.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
North Carolina.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
Ohio.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	250	-
Oklahoma.....	194	-	194	-	194	-	200	-
Oregon.....	100	-	100	-	100	-	150	-
Pennsylvania.....	140	-	140	-	140	-	150	-
Rhode Island.....	100	-	100	-	100	-	150	-
South Carolina.....	140	-	140	-	140	-	150	-
Tennessee.....	160	-	160	-	160	-	160	-
Texas.....	540	-	540	-	540	-	700	-
Vermont.....	40	-	40	-	40	-	40	-
Virginia.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
Washington.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
West Virginia.....	200	-	200	-	200	-	200	-
Wisconsin.....	500	-	500	-	500	-	600	-
Total, Available	16,502	4	18,860	4	23,575	4	25,000	4

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table OPPE-9 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D. C.....	\$539	\$593	\$1,259	\$1,774
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	408	449	991	1,221
11	Total personnel compensation.....	947	1,042	2,250	2,995
12	Personal benefits.....	300	391	702	932
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	-	-	-	-
	Total, personnel compensation. and benefits.....	1,247	1,433	2,952	3,927
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons.....	21	85	100	150
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	4	36	36	40
23.2	Rental payments to others.....	57	8	8	10
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	11	1	1	1
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	25	261	1,100	1,000
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources.....	552	1,348	1,982	2,059
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	4	1	1	20
31.0	Equipment.....	70	131	100	150
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	1,976	3,000	3,000	3,000
	Total, Other Objects.....	2,720	4,871	6,328	8,430
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	3,967	6,304	9,280	10,357
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$11	\$8	\$8	\$8
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$168,135	\$170,657	\$174,923	\$180,171
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$123,700	\$124,200	\$127,305	\$131,124
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.8	13.9	13.9	13.9

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STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) created the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and improve agency collaboration. Section 12406 of the 2018 Farm Bill changed the name of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) to OPPE, and the duties previously delegated to OAO, including minority serving higher education initiatives, the Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison, Farmworker Coordinator, the Minority Farmers and Ranchers Advisory Committee and the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Advisory Committee. Additionally, the 2018 Farm Bill provided mandatory funding for the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program formerly known as the Outreach and Education for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program – 2501 Grant Program. Section 12305 of the 2018 Farm Bill also established the position of Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator to promote the role of youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education. In addition to the requirements of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE provides oversight for the Women in Agriculture Initiative, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

Current Activities

OPPE develops and maintains partnerships focused on solutions to challenges facing rural and historically underserved communities and connects those communities to the educational opportunities, programmatic tools, and resources available through USDA.

The core mission of this office is to advocate, facilitate, and establish partnerships that deliver holistic opportunities from USDA, other Federal agencies, and public and private organizations to our customers, partners, and stakeholders to address the challenges and needs that face the communities they serve.

OPPE renewed the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers Charter and facilitated the selection of new members for the 15-seat committee. This committee hosted four public meetings and proffered recommendations for the Secretary's consideration.

OPPE is reviewing policy to continue the Minority Farm Register of minority farmer subscribers to stay abreast of USDA activities and funding opportunities. Although now inactive, the register provided USDA agencies and stakeholders access to over 5,200 minority farmers.

Examples of Recent Progress

2501 Program:

OPPE continued the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill provisions for the 2501 Program, including the new requirement for a peer-review grant panel, an increase in maximum grant amounts, longer periods of performance, and priority for nonprofit organizations/applicants. Accomplishments in 2022 included:

- Awarded 27 grants worth \$20.6 million to 2501 projects.
- Led the internal and external informational teleconferences and outreach efforts throughout the year to ensure USDA stakeholders had access to the most updated programmatic and funding opportunity information.
- Administered the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center grant where an additional \$1.5 million was awarded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to continue research on policies affecting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi. Assisted in providing two capacity building training sessions for all potential public grantees during the open period of both Funding Opportunity Announcements to address any clarifying questions perspective applicants might have.
- The 2501 team continued to provide data testing and user acceptance to assist with necessary enhancements to its grants management system (ezFedGrants). The 2501 Program virtually hosted its fifth Annual 2501 Partnership Symposium, which brings together the Department's headquarters and field personnel, USDA stakeholders, 2501 outreach grantees, and external partners (nonprofits, for profits, and local officials).
- Assisted the 2501 Staff with garnering required feedback from stakeholders as a new mandate in the 2018 Farm Bill. This feedback will be considered for future programmatic enhancements to improve program.

Examples of 2501 Success

Kentucky State University (KSU) used several methods for assisting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and veteran farmers. Most of the participants were from rural and persistent poverty counties. This includes one-on-one visits to their farms to provide technical information and to assist them with applying for USDA programs including NRCS programs, FSA farm operating and ownership loans, RD home improvement loans and grants, and other programs. When the pandemic shut down Extension, KSU started Zoom, Facebook Live, social media, newsletters, and hundreds of telephone calls to do one-on-one and group outreach. The second method was the

popular “Third Thursday” and KSU Field Day workshops covering topics such as production, farm management, marketing, food safety, veterinary concerns, and alternative farm enterprises. Third Thursday workshops and the KSU Field Days had some 2,500 participants over 30 field days. Participant breakdown included 15percent African American and socially disadvantaged farmers, 20percent veteran farmers, and 20percent beginning farmers.

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) worked closely with Washington State’s Hmong community to bring together farmers through the various Hmong clans to form the first Hmong-owned farmer cooperative. After forming the cooperative, NABC staff assisted the cooperative in developing a compelling application resulting in the award of a \$0.3 million USDA Value-Added Producer grant to help the cooperative begin marketing and selling vegetables. NABC staff was also able to help the cooperative receive another \$0.3 million grant from Washington State for infrastructure to assist the cooperative in funding their own aggregation facility and purchase a commercial quality dehydrator and freeze dryer along with needed supplies. NABC staff is currently actively working with the Hmong Association of Washington, the Washington Hmong Farmers’ Cooperative, King County Conservation, Snohomish County Conservation, Washington Farmland Trust, and other private entities to identify farmland and cooler space for the cooperative.

Tennessee State University (TSU) hosted their “Farm Academy” in three main areas in the State of Tennessee to educate and train new, beginning, and existing producers and determine what they might need for their farming/production operations. Between the three (3) new Farm Academies in Tennessee (Nashville, Memphis, and Wartburg) TSU graduated over 137 new, beginning, underserved and veteran producers. These graduates received hands-on education and training in all areas of agriculture. The participants were able to attend courses which covered farm equipment, USDA programs and services, business planning, plant and animal production and management.

Farmworker Coordinator:

Farmworker outreach efforts to the community continue during times of declared emergencies. Farmworkers were formidably challenged during the COVID 19 Pandemic. USDA outreach efforts, thru partnerships with organizations serving the needs of the farmworker communities, ensure USDA programs and services are offered in a culturally and linguistically inclusive manner. Currently OPPE partners with USDA agencies to focus on nutrition, housing, mitigating COVID-19 impact, education and beginning farming outreach. Farmworkers are a high-risk population for human trafficking. OPPE plays a lead role in the whole of Government human trafficking efforts of the Senior Policy Operating Group.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - 1890 Land-Grant Institutions National Program:

The 1890 National Program was established to ensure the Department was implementing provisions of the 1890 “Morrill Act” mirroring the 1862 Morrill Act. The 1890 Program does this by equipping 1890 colleges and universities to educate and prepare citizens to benefit American agriculture, rural economies, and more. The Program works collaboratively with local USDA agencies, 1890 Land-Grant Universities and the private sector (business, education, political, community-based, non-profit and faith-based leaders and organizations) to assist local communities in acquiring wealth, prosperity and asset creation. The 1890 Program staff provide support to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Management and supervisory oversight to the Program and a field staff of nineteen USDA Liaisons (full capacity) stationed across the United States southeastern corridor and parts of the mid-west.
- Coordinated Departmental efforts concerning the White House Historically Black College and Universities Initiative, and submission of the 2021 Departmental update to the annual WH HBCUI Report.
- In 2022, the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program selected 125 newly selected scholars. The students selected directly contribute to one of the USDA key priorities – attracting, inspiring, and retaining an engaged and motivated workforce that proudly represents USDA and make it a best place to work. Additionally, this program contributes to the diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility values of USDA. The 2022 cohort of USDA 1890 National Scholars represent the largest number of scholars selected during one application cycle since the program’s inception in 1992. Since 2020, USDA provided opportunities for nearly 247 1890 Scholars.
- The 2018 Farm Bill (Section 12519) provides conversion authority for the 1890 National Scholars Program. This allows USDA to maximize its investment in 1890 National Scholars. The USDA 1890 Task Force partnership with the 1890 Council of Presidents was reestablished. The Task Force serves as a principal working group for the Secretary and his or her designees to explore mutual beneficial and short- and long-term goals.
- In 2022 Departmental successes include a recommitment to the relationship between USDA and the Council of 1890 Universities through the renewing of the MOU between these two organizations.

- Partnered with higher education institutions to host over 15 summer agriculture recruitment programs. This included the processing, reviewing, and ranking of over 1025 USDA 1890 National scholarship applications. This resulted in the execution of 125 USDA 1890 National scholarships.
- Liaisons conducted a combination of 350 virtually and physically university visits to promote USDA programs and opportunities.
- Liaisons directly assisted with the creation of 550 USAJOBS accounts for students and the creation of 570 Federal resumes.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program:

The 1994 National Program was established to ensure the Department fulfills the requirements of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 and Section 882 of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. These Acts established tribally controlled colleges and universities as land-grant institutions and required that the Department develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with 1994 Institutions and establish programs to ensure these school and the Native American communities they serve have equitable access to the Department's employment, programs, services, and resources. There are currently 35 land-grant institutions.

The 1994 Program does this by equipping tribal schools' capacities to benefit American agriculture, rural Tribal economies, and to strengthen the United States' food security. To help USDA fulfill its mandated responsibilities, the 1994 Program staff provide critical assistance to the Secretary of Agriculture with the establishment and maintenance of formal memorandum of agreements (MOA) with 1994 Institutions and the development of Departmental Regulations, policy, guidance, and procedures.

Accomplishments include:

Scholarship Program

The following are processes implemented to ensure equitable access for tribal colleges and the students that attend these school to an OPPE run program.

- Enabled the inclusion of all tribal colleges and their students to apply to the 1994 Tribal Scholars Program.
- Enabled the 1994 Tribal Scholarship to follow the student beyond a two-year degree granting tribal college.
- Enabled Agencies to pay for housing.
- Created a process for Agencies to plan to include 1994 tribal colleges in their human resource activities and through the Tribal Scholars Program.
- Reduced two 13-page applications to a one-page application that may serve both high school or college applicants.

Memorandum of Agreement

Developed the updated memorandum of agreement with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Once signed by both parties, the function of the agreement will improve the processes of equity and inclusion for USDA.

Collaborations

- Collaborated with the Agriculture Research Service to explore a Shared Research Agenda with tribal colleges and universities resulting in these schools being included in ARS.
- Developed with ARS to re-establish Field Days in North Dakota.
- Established with the Office of Tribal Relations a cooperative agreement with ARS to work on a Food Sovereignty Initiative.
- Co-hosted a two-day series of webinars, the Indigenous Youth Career Engagement, with the Forest Service focused on recruiting Indigenous students and 1994 Tribal College students. The presentations included USDA's cooperative agreements and programs from the 1994 Program, Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and with third party land-grant and Native agriculture programs.
- Collaboration with the USDA Office of Tribal Relations for representation on the Secretary's Strike Team on Reforestation.

Listening Session on Barriers and Equity April 18, 2022

The 1994 Program collaborated with the Office of Tribal Relation to prepare and execute listening sessions with tribal leaders on barriers to equity within USDA programs.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program:

The Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) National Program seeks to provide outreach to and partner with colleges and universities with undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment consisting of at student body population of least 25percent Hispanic students. The HSI Program staff provide support to the Secretary of Agriculture through accomplishment of the following:

- Continued maintenance of the formal memorandum of understanding between USDA and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).
- Hosting of the E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship, most recently including 20 selections in 2022, spanning six states, Puerto Rico, and 18 separate Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and 2 Hispanic-Serving School Districts. Applicant pool consisted of 62 applications from across the United States.
- Selection and installment of the USDA HACU Leadership Group a USDA Advisory group consisting of 10 members with equal representation for USDA Senior Leadership and HSI Presidents; nominated and confirmed by the USDA Secretary and HACU.
- Coordination with ARS for the management of the USDA HACU National Internship Program; with a placement of 299 interns at USDA in 2022, as of November 22, 2022.
- Coordination of 2nd Annual USDA HSI Federal Resource Symposium, a virtual event for HSI stakeholders to learn about available USDA and other federal resources available to them for research, capacity building, and workforce development. At total of 232 participants spanning 20 states, Puerto Rico, and DC attended.
- Coordination with OPPE Outreach Division Liaisons for partnerships at SIs, including event participations such as AgDiscovery Programs, AgScience Summer Programs, HSI National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded experiential learning programs, and other programs encouraging careers in agriculture, food, and natural resources.
- Increased access to USDA employment, programs, and services. These include the E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship for faculty/staff, USDA-HACU Leadership Group for institutional and department leadership, coordination of USDA participation in the annual HACU conference for HSI faculty, staff, administrators, and students; HSI solicitation of USDA NIFA and 2501 Grants; and HSI outreach for participation in USDA Advisory Groups such as the Equity Commission.

Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (MVAL):

The Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison works to connect veterans to agriculture, agricultural opportunities, and employment opportunities at USDA. As such, the MVAL worked with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), NRCS, and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to increase assistance and leadership to beginning veteran ranchers by appointing a beginning ranching and farming coordinator for every state to provide assistance to veterans beginning in ranching or farming.

Accomplishments Include:

- Participation in numerous local prosperity summits across the country to ensure veterans are aware and are participating in local prosperity initiatives.
- Numerous panel conversations and events as a guest speaker, including the Urban Agriculture in the District of Columbia discussion at University of the District of Columbia (once), the U. S. Air National Guard Post Deployment Yellow Ribbon event in Florida (quarterly), Hiring Our Heroes (quarterly), Farmer Veteran Coalition (quarterly), Military Spouse Employment Program (monthly), Dairy Grazers (semi-annual), Veterans' Franchise (semi-annual), Department of Defense (monthly), Veterans Administration (monthly), Department of Labor (monthly).
- On behalf of USDA, maintenance of the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) Vocational Readiness and Employment Program that enables veterans to participate with USDA agencies in experience internships through the VA's Vocational Readiness Program.
- Continual liaison with various major veterans' groups (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wounded Warriors, etc.) to discuss farming and employment opportunities available as well as the impact of the Faith and Opportunities Summits on the veteran's community.
- Collaborated with the VA and the USDA Food Nutrition Service (FNS) to create an opportunity to provide veterans with information on food insecurity and enrollment information for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as part of their primary care visits with the VA.
- Collaborated with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Forest Service to fill vacancies in the Food Inspection and Warehouse Examiner, Agricultural Commodity Food Graders, and Wild Land Firefighter positions using non-competitive hiring authorities for Veterans.

- Worked with FSIS, AMS, and the Forest Service to maximize the standing of newly created Apprenticeship Programs, such as Operation Warfighter and the DoD SkillBridge Program. This included the USDA signing a new memorandum of understanding with the Department of Defense (DoD) to participate in the DoD Skill Bridge Program to open USDA opportunities for over 200,000 transitioning service members annually.
- Facilitated the USDA signing of a memorandum of understanding regarding military spouse employment and worked to expand its outreach efforts to military veterans' spouses.

Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator

The coordinator conducts outreach to programs and agencies within the Department to work with schools and youth-serving organizations to develop joint programs and initiatives between stakeholders. The coordinator also provides resources and input on best practices in motivating and preparing students to pursue careers in the agriculture, food, and natural resources systems. The program is charged with raising awareness among youth about the importance of agriculture in a diversity of fields and disciplines, as well as providing information to persons involved in youth, food, and agriculture organizations about the availability of and eligibility requirements for agricultural programs. Since inception, the program has focused on creating and leading Department-wide functions and activities to support an inclusive, prosperous, intergenerational agricultural workforce. The purpose of these efforts is to ensure meaningful engagement with young people from early childhood to early adulthood. These efforts are accomplished through education, internship opportunities, volunteer experiences and other activities which prepare them for quality employment opportunities in food, agriculture, and natural resources.

Accomplishments include:

Management of the Faces of Agriculture and USDA speaker series was launched in Spring 2021 to inspire the next generation of the USDA workforce. The series is offered to high school and college level students across the country. Each month USDA researchers, scientists, technicians, engineers, foresters, and other STEM professionals participate in the virtual speaking presentations to share their story. This effort provides a platform for students to engage with USDA Professionals, learn about their personal and professional backgrounds and learn about exciting projects speakers are managing with the goal of increasing interest in agricultural careers.

White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)

The Department strategically partnered with the newly restructured WHIAANHPI to broaden engagement and participation of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (APIs) in USDA programs, initiatives, and employment opportunities. In 2022, the USDA participated in the WHIAANHPI outreach on access to economic resources and opportunities to empower APIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy. USDA is focusing on identifying and eliminating any existing institutional policies or barriers to programs and services; promoting inclusion and belonging for AA and NHPI; collection and use of disaggregated data; and language access.

Women in Agriculture

OPPE continues its efforts to support Women in Agriculture initiatives. OPPE will continue promoting ways to include women in USDA outreach efforts focusing on broadening participation, in USDA Advisory Committees and USDA programs and opportunities in helping build leadership and advancement opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness.

Committees Advisory

OPPE renewed the charter and worked with the Office of the Secretary to complete the selection and appointment of new members for the Minority Farmers Advisory Committee. OPPE continues to work closely with USDA agencies in the management of the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Advisory Committee.