

**2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – PRESIDENTIAL E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND LINES OF BUSINESS**

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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 regarding 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**

USDA participates in 14 Presidential E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business (LoB); however, this document describes only nine Presidential E-Government Initiatives and LoB, that are funded through USDA distributed funding. By participating in the E-Government Initiatives and LoBs, USDA has improved its business processes and program delivery to its customers, employees, and partners. Through these efforts, USDA has been able to work with other Federal agencies to streamline common areas of business delivery (e.g., rulemaking, payroll, and grants management) and learn from best practices throughout the government. The Department will continue to implement these Initiatives and LoBs to achieve further benefits for its customers.

The following table reflects estimated USDA contributions and funding amounts for 2021 through 2024 to the E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business.

**Table eGov-1. E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business (thousands of dollars)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>2021 Actual</b>	<b>2022 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Estimate</b>	<b>2024 Estimate</b>
Budget Line of Business .....	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Benefits.gov .....	452,186	443,380	409,031	429,831
Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan .....	106,070	106,070	106,070	106,070
Hiring Assessment .....	-	217,000	0	0
E-Rulemaking .....	610,195	750,211	785,774	657,312
Financial Management Line of Business .....	167,510	167,510	167,510	167,510
Geospatial Line of Business.....	225,000	225,000	225,000	225,000
Grants.gov.....	496,000	510,000	597,000	621,999
Human Resources Line of Business.....	273,913	273,913	273,913	273,913
Integrated Award Environment <sup>4</sup> .....	2,731,401	2,731,401	2,731,401	2,431,642
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>5,182,275</b>	<b>5,544,485</b>	<b>5,415,699</b>	<b>5,033,277</b>

**BUDGET LINE OF BUSINESS (BLOB)**

The BLoB provides benefits to partner agencies by encouraging best practices crossing all aspects of Federal budgeting – from budget formulation and execution to collaboration, human capital needs, and providing tools and resources. USDA 1,000 users registered for the MAX Federal Community site. The Community site can be used for sharing information, collaboratively drafting documents (including the direct editing of documents posted on the site), supporting workgroups, submitting central reports, and more. In addition, USDA has used MAX Collect exercises and associated publishing capabilities to collect, store, process and publish information.

**BENEFITS.GOV**

Launched in 2002, Benefits.gov is one of the earliest E-Government initiatives and was established as the official benefits website of the U.S. government. Prior to Benefits.gov, citizens looking for government benefit information had to search through a complicated maze of web pages, often unsuccessfully. Today, millions of citizens have online access to information and can keep up with the latest benefit-related information by subscribing to the quarterly eNewsletter, as well as by following Benefits.gov on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. USDA currently has 312 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on Benefits.gov, including food and nutrition programs administered by State agencies. In 2021, USDA

programs generated 5,161,551 Forms of Assistance page views on Benefits.gov; 1,222,216 transfers from Benefits.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and over 6,800 transfers from USDA websites to Benefits.gov.

Through Benefits.gov, USDA provides information on over 300 programs related to food assistance, business and farm loans, crop insurance, disaster assistance and more. Participation in Benefits.gov supports USDA's goal to provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply, by helping increase public awareness of USDA benefit programs on food and nutrition. In addition, Benefits.gov provides information on many other USDA programs including farm loans, rural housing and business loans, and agricultural programs.

#### **DISASTER ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (DAIP)**

The mission of DAIP is to provide disaster survivors with information, support, and services, to apply for disaster assistance through data-sharing efforts between Federal, tribal, State, local, and private partners. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, under the Department of Homeland Security, acts as the managing partner. The website DisasterAssistance.gov reduces the time needed by disaster survivors to apply for aid and check the status of claims, while decreasing redundancy in application forms and processes. Disaster survivors complete a mini survey online from their computer or mobile device and receive a personalized list of assistance of over 75 benefit and assistance programs available from the 17 participating federal agencies. In addition, participants can check on the status of applications and get updates via mobile alert or email. In 2022, USDA had 20 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on DisasterAssistance.gov that generated over 119,771 Forms of Assistance page views; 38,771 transfers from DisasterAssistance.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and 1,481 transfers from USDA websites to DisasterAssistance.gov.

#### **E-RULEMAKING**

USDA uses the Federal-wide Regulations.gov website and the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) as the primary repository for promoting public participation and input into the development and issuance of USDA rulemaking. All USDA Federal Register rules, proposed rules, and notices are made available for public comment on E-Rulemaking's Regulations.gov. In 2021, FDMS launched a new Multi-Factor Authentication to protect critical information while simplifying user experience. In 2022, FDMS made numerous user experience improvements, including a batch posting option to allow users to select multiple documents within a docket and batch post the selected documents onto Regulations.gov. In 2022, USDA agencies also posted 877 rules, proposed rules, and notice documents to Regulations.gov and 196,229 comments from the public in response.

#### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT LINE OF BUSINESS (FMLOB)**

In 2022, USDA OCFO's continued focus is on evolving its financial management systems to a next generation Intelligent Enterprise Suite (S4/HANA) that will streamline the business processes and to integrate financial management activities across USDA agencies. Key objectives include improved user experience and compliance with financial reporting and regulatory standards. The proposed transformation uses artificial intelligence, augmented and predictive analytics and planning capabilities to deliver consistent, accurate and standardized data for financial planning and reporting (both at the strategic and operational levels) throughout the department.

#### **GEOSPATIAL LOB**

USDA's Enterprise Geospatial Management Office (EGMO) works to enhance and empower the USDA enterprise to meet mission requirements by providing strategic leadership; encouraging innovation; modernizing the geospatial portfolio; facilitating communication and collaboration on geospatial activities and initiatives within the Department; coordinating across Federal Agencies; engagement with USDA customers and with public and private stakeholders. Consistent with its 201 Enterprise Geospatial Strategic Plan USDA has advanced a deployment plan that includes new department regulations and data standards. Updated geospatial policies and guidance were completed in 2022 and are expected to be published in 2023. As part of USDA's active support for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) it reported on the updated National Geospatial Data Assets and made them available to the public through GeoPlatform.gov. A full report on USDA's alignment with Geospatial Data Act requirements is anticipated to be published at FGDC.gov in 2023. As part of its efforts to ensure efficiencies, EGMO established enterprise level agreements for the purchase of geographic information systems software that resulted in significant cost avoidance in 2022 and are anticipating a new software agreement completed by 2023. Additionally, in 2022 we implemented modernization efforts to reduce storage costs associated with geospatial imagery by continuing the development of agency-wide shared geospatial platforms.

#### **GRANTS.GOV**

The site <http://www.grants.gov> houses information on over 1,000 grant programs awarding more than \$500 billion annually and vets grant applications for Federal grant-making agencies, provides a common website and centralized

location for federal agencies to post discretionary funding opportunities and for grant seekers to find and apply for them. In 2022, USDA posted 182 funding opportunities and received 10,580 applications.

Using the <http://www.grants.gov> system makes it faster, easier and more cost effective for grant applicants to electronically interact with federal grant-making agencies. It also provides the following key benefits, among many others, to the grant community. (1) Helping the grant community learn more about available opportunities by centralizing and standardizing grant information, application packages and processes for finding and applying for federal grants. (2) Facilitating interaction with the federal government by streamlining the federal grants process. (3) Simplifying the grant application process to save applicants costs, time, and hassle. (4) Making it easier to research and find federal grant opportunities through improved search capabilities – from a simple key word search to advanced searches over numerous grant opportunity categories – and having grant opportunities sent directly to grant applicant desktops through custom search profiles. (5) Making electronic grant application processing easier by increasing the ease-of-use through enhanced features common to the Web, such as downloaded and fillable forms, auto-populated data, error checks and email notifications. (6) Providing a secure and reliable source to apply for federal grants by validating grant applicants via a five-step registration process and ensuring website stability and security through Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology to encrypt transactional data and communications over the Internet.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES LINE OF BUSINESS (HRLOB)**

The Human Resources Line of Business (HRLOB) improves USDA’s internal efficiency and effectiveness by streamlining and automating the exchange of employee human resource information. HRLOB products comprise a toolkit giving agencies a standard definition of Human Capital Management functions, processes, and data, which promotes consistency and interoperability across agencies. In 2022, HRLOB released several updates to its Human Capital Business Reference Model functional framework, Human Capital Federal Integrated Business Framework and Human Capital Information Model. USDA has leveraged these products. In 2022, HRLOB has continued to lead Design Thinking sessions with over 100 MAESC members and agency SMEs to better understand users and their needs, challenge assumptions, redefine problems, and brainstorm innovative solutions. USDA has been a participant in these sessions and has used the information shared in MAESC meetings to inform updates to USDA Human Capital policies and procedures. In 2022, USDA leveraged HRLOB products to drive Human Capital data advancements within its Human Capital Information Systems and its Human Capital Dashboards.

#### **INTEGRATED AWARD ENVIRONMENT (IAE)**

IAE uses innovative processes and technologies to improve systems and operations for those who award, administer, or receive federal financial assistance, contracts, and intergovernmental transactions. In 2022, USDA continued with Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) implementation. In the fourth quarter, USDA had 100 percent accuracy in File A, over 99 percent on File B, and 99 percent on File C. File D2 financial assistance award reporting had a 7 percent accuracy rate. These files transmit financial data to the US Department of Treasury as required by the DATA Act. USDA continues to improve and refine the DATA Act repository with additional automation and record validation. EzFedGrants reporting is now automated and reporting DATA Act records. USDA published a DATA Act Data Quality Plan in 2019 and a DATA Act Data Quality Framework to assist agencies in reporting and evaluation their data with the goal of improving data quality. In 2022, the IAE continued to integrate the SAM.gov website implemented the new Unique Entity Identifier which replaced the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS).