

2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – RURAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES

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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.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs

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

<u>Item</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2022</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>Estimated</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Estimated</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations	\$273,839	4,405	\$300,285	4,579	\$351,087	4,663	\$527,182	5,063
Mandatory Appropriations.....	3,000	-	3,000	3	3,000	3	3,000	3
Rural Housing Insurance Fund:								
Discretionary Appropriations	490,846	-	488,400	-	529,357	-	813,848	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	39,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rental Assistance:								
Discretionary Appropriations	1,410,000	-	1,450,000	-	1,487,926	-	1,688,109	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Multi-Family Housing:								
Discretionary Appropriations	70,000	-	45,000	-	48,000	-	-	-
Mutual Self-Help Housing:								
Discretionary Appropriations	31,000	-	32,000	-	32,000	-	40,000	-
Rural Housing Assistance Grants:								
Discretionary Appropriations	47,500	-	51,000	-	51,000	-	70,000	-
Supplemental Appropriations	-	-	-	-	60,000	-	-	-
Community Facilities:								
Discretionary Appropriations	76,000	-	241,449	-	343,490	-	86,745	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplemental Appropriations	-	-	-	-	75,300	-	-	-
Rural Business Programs:								
Discretionary Appropriations	61,400	-	73,125	-	86,520	-	103,600	-
Intermediary Relending Program:								
Discretionary Appropriations	7,407	-	5,992	-	7,781	-	10,201	-
Rural Cooperative Development Grants:								
Discretionary Appropriations	26,600	-	27,600	-	28,300	-	29,800	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	57,065	-	19,022	-	19,022	-	19,022	-
Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program:								
Discretionary Appropriations	6,000	-	6,500	-	6,000	-	8,250	-
Rural Energy for America Program:								
Discretionary Appropriations	10,392	-	12,920	-	18	-	30,000	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	50,000	-	50,000	-	50,000	-	50,000	-

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Item	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Health Foods Financing Initiative:								
Discretionary Appropriations	5,000	-	5,000	-	3,000	-	5,000	-
Energy Assistance Payments:								
Mandatory Appropriations.....	7,000	-	107,000	-	7,000	-	-	-
Supplemental Appropriations	-	-	500,000	-	-	-	-	-
Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program:								
Discretionary Appropriations	616,567	-	643,307	-	586,404	-	872,295	-
Supplemental Appropriations	-	-	-	-	325,000	-	-	-
Rural Electrification and Telecommunications:								
Discretionary Appropriations	46,547	-	46,810	-	48,496	-	89,946	-
Mandatory Appropriations.....	-	-	10,700,000	-	-	-	-	-
Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband:								
Discretionary Appropriations	628,000	-	536,387	-	466,503	-	502,037	-
Supplemental Appropriations	-	-	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	-
High Energy Cost Grants:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	10,000	-	10,000	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
Total Discretionary Appropriations	3,817,098	4,405	3,975,775	4,579	4,085,882	4,663	4,887,013	5,063
Total Mandatory Appropriations	756,065	-	10,879,022	3	79,022	3	72,022	3
Total Supplemental Appropriations.....	-	-	3,465,000	-	672,390	-	212,090	-
Total Adjusted Appropriation.....	4,573,163	4,405	18,319,797	4,582	4,837,294	4,666	5,171,125	5,066
Sequestration	-4,504	-	-4,504	-	-4,504	-	-16,300	-
Net Transfers	-624	-	-34,430	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, SOY	1,418,115	-	2,260,005	-	15,629,019	-	12,226,880	-
Recoveries, Other	186,294	-	141,131	-	90,485	-	771,908	-
Total Available	6,172,444	4,405	20,681,999	4,582	20,552,294	4,666	18,153,612	5,066
Lapsing Balances.....	-18,549	-	-405	-	-35,062	-	-	-
Rescinded Balances	-12,000	-	-	-	-	-	-22,156	-
Balance Available, EOY.....	-2,260,005	-	-15,629,019	-	-12,919,240	-	-4,921,539	-
Total Obligations	3,881,890	4,405	5,052,575	4,582	7,597,992	4,666	13,209,917	5,066
Other Funding:								
Rural Economic Development								
Loans	4,775	-	2,340	-	7,403	-	13,395	-
Rural Economic Development								
Grants	10,000	-	10,000	-	15,000	-	10,000	-
ReConnect	104,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation, Other	118,775	-	12,340	-	22,403	-	23,395	-
Funding.....	118,775	-	12,340	-	22,403	-	23,395	-
Sequestration	-842	-	-703	-	-1,277	-	-1,334	-
Net Transfers	51,861	-	13,102	-	5,598	-	-395	-
Balance Available, SOY (enter with plus).....	254,467	-	245,930	-	51,232	-	32,332	-
Recoveries, Other (enter with plus)	123,051	-	3,927	-	2,797	-	1,247	-
Total Available, Other Funding	547,312	-	274,596	-	80,752	-	55,245	-
Bal. Available, EOY (enter with minus)	-245,930	-	-51,232	-	-32,332	-	-31,851	-
Total Obligations, Other funding.....	301,382	-	223,364	-	48,420	-	23,395	-
Total Obligations, RD.....	4,183,272	4,405	5,275,940	4,582	7,646,412	4,666	13,233,311	5,066
Other USDA:								
Agricultural Marketing Service	277	-	115	-	115	-	115	-
Agricultural Research Service	6	-	3	-	3	-	3	-
Animal & Plant Health Inspection..	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-
Client Experience Center	6	-	1	-	1	-	1	-

2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – RURAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Item	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Commodity Credit Corporation	-	-	1,176	-	1,176	-	1,176	-
Farm Service Agency	3,810	-	4,392	-	4,392	-	4,392	-
Food Safety & Inspection Service ..	17	-	18	-	18	-	18	-
Foreign Agricultural Service.....	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	-
Forest Service	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FPAC BC	4,961	-	5,594	-	5,594	-	5,594	-
Homeland Security Office	24	-	25	-	25	-	25	-
National Institute of Foods	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natural Resources Conservation.....	46	-	3	-	3	-	3	-
Office of Budget & Program								
Analysis	4	-	4	-	4	-	4	-
Office of Chief Economist.....	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Office of Chief Financial Officer....	1	-	1,988	-	1,988	-	1,988	-
Office of Civil Rights	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Office of Executive Secretariat	24	-	25	-	25	-	25	-
Office of General Counsel	20	-	21	-	21	-	21	-
Office of Inspector General	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Office of Secretary.....	7	-	8	-	8	-	8	-
Risk Management Agency.....	4	-	6	-	6	-	6	-
USDA Dept. Administration.....	1	-	8	-	8	-	8	-
USDA Food & Nutrition Service....	3	-	4	-	4	-	4	-
Miscellaneous Reimbursements.....	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Total, Other USDA	9,325	29	13,401	34	13,401	34	13,401	34
Total, Agriculture Available	6,729,081	4,434	20,969,996	4,616	20,646,447	4,700	18,222,257	5,100
Other Federal Funds:								
Dept. of Health & Human Services	533	-	63	-	63	-	63	-
Defense Finance and Accounting ...	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Emergency Mgmt. Agency	9	-	159	-	159	-	159	-
Customs and Border Protection	-	-	33	-	33	-	33	-
Total, Other Federal.....	544	-	255	-	255	-	255	-
Total Available, RD.....	6,729,625	4,434	20,970,250	4,616	20,646,702	4,700	18,222,512	5,100

Note: The details associated with Supplemental appropriations provided to the Office of the Secretary, but implemented in Rural Development, is found in the USDA Budget Summary and is not reflected above.

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES

Table RD-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTES

Item	2021			2022			2023			2024		
	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Estimated Total	D.C.	Field	Estimated Total
SES	22	1	23	18	6	24	16	8	24	16	8	24
SL.....	1	-	1	2	-	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
GS-15.....	74	23	97	33	116	149	34	114	148	34	114	148
GS-14.....	125	99	224	38	190	228	35	230	265	38	250	288
GS-13.....	295	657	952	134	862	996	130	862	992	141	938	1,079
GS-12.....	191	1,035	1,226	39	1,213	1,252	37	1,258	1,295	40	1,369	1,409
GS-11.....	67	464	531	12	577	589	16	576	592	17	626	643
GS-10.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-9.....	208	408	616	20	587	607	22	594	616	23	645	668
GS-8.....	26	9	35	9	10	19	9	8	17	9	8	17
GS-7.....	228	447	675	21	543	564	20	533	553	21	591	612

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Item	2021 Actual		2022 Actual		2023 Estimated		2024 Estimated					
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
GS-6.....	15	99	114	9	76	85	8	74	82	8	80	88
GS-5.....	16	70	86	1	82	83	1	79	80	1	85	86
GS-4.....	6	22	28	-	19	19	1	29	30	1	31	32
GS-3.....	1	3	4	-	3	3	-	8	8	-	8	8
GS-2.....	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
Total Permanent.....	1,277	3,338	4,615	338	4,285	4,623	332	4,375	4,707	352	4,755	5,107
Total Perm. FT EOY.....	1,277	3,338	4,615	338	4,285	4,623	332	4,375	4,707	352	4,755	5,107
FTE.....	1,242	3,192	4,434	334	4,282	4,616	332	4,368	4,700	352	4,748	5,100

In addition to those numbers, there are temporary positions as well.

VEHICLE FLEET

Motor Vehicle Fleet: The passenger motor vehicles of Rural Development (RD) are used almost exclusively by RD State field office staff in order to provide program delivery to essential facilities, such as services for water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone services. In the course of their daily work, these personnel often need to travel to communities, individual farms, commercial firms, and State agricultural offices which are only accessible by vehicle. 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.

Replacement Criteria: RD replaces vehicles in accordance with Title 41, CFR § 102–34.270, Table of Minimum Replacement Standards. RD replaces and disposes of vehicles using data on utilization, age, condition, and funding availability. The average age of RD’s vehicle fleet is five years. All replacement vehicles selected should be alternative fuel vehicles or Gas/Hybrid vehicles, which have an extended life cycle. Vehicle replacements will be determined and approved on a case-by-case basis for 2024 by the Enterprise Services Division Director and the Fleet Manager.

Reductions to Fleet: RD ended 2022, with 601 vehicles (leased and owned), which is a reduction of 4 vehicles from 2021. RD current fleet inventory is 593 vehicles, which is a reduction of 8 vehicles from 2022 levels. Fleet additions are determined and approved on a case-by-case basis by the Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Chief Enterprise Officer of the Enterprise Office. For 2024, RD is expecting to maintain the fleet at 593 vehicles.

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

	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.....	526	53	200	4	2	-	-	0	785	\$3,200,000
2021 End of Year Operating Inventory.....	386	51	182	4	2	-	-	-	605	2,482,535
2022 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022 Planned Disposals.....	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
2022 End of Year Operating Inventory.....	380	40	174	4	2	-	-	-	601	2,563,323
2023 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023 Planned Disposals.....	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
2023 End of Year Operating Inventory.....	353	38	186	4	12	-	-	-	593	2,272,541
2024 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	14	13	9	-	-	-	36	-
2024 Planned Disposals.....	33	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-

	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Truck s 4X2	Light Truck s 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2024 End of Year Operating Inventory	320	35	200	17	21	-	-	-	593	2,563,323

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

Fiscal Year	Net Active Fleet, SOY	Disposals	Replacements	Additions	Total Acquisitions	Net Active Fleet, EOY
2021	750	147	2	-	2	605
2022	605	10	6	-	6	601
2023	601	21	13	-	13	593
2024	593	36	-	36	-	593

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

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

Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service.....	\$164	\$168	\$141	\$148
Mail and Reproduction Services	1,097	797	776	794
Integrated Procurement Systems	155	174	173	178
Procurement Operations Services.....	84	40	32	22
Personnel and Document Security Program.....	-	-	221	237
AskUSDA Contact Center	-	-	1,023	1,072
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	59	64	84	97
Subtotal	1,559	1,243	2,450	2,548
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	310	444	1,069	711
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	1,255	1,156	1,415	1,467
Financial Management Systems.....	2,722	2,690	2,837	3,051
Internal Control Support Services	223	221	290	302
Subtotal	4,200	4,067	4,542	4,820
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	33,479	31,782	27,558	27,025
Department Administration Information Technology Office .	2,757	3,868	1,443	1,443
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	33,803	36,801	37,653	38,388
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services.....	-	-	1,397	1,456
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services.....	-	-	1,215	1,261
Enterprise Network Services	3,117	2,332	3,491	4,264
Subtotal	73,156	74,782	72,757	73,837
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	234	296	318	333
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	79,459	80,832	81,135	82,249
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	309	295	367	367
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	-	-	98	98
Human Resources Priority Goals Program.....	-	-	186	186
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network	153	162	162	162
Medical Services	119	118	148	148

Item	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated
National Capital Region Interpreting Services.....	17	25	87	87
Office of Customer Experience.....	432	407	147	147
Personnel and Document Security Program.....	80	81	-	-
Physical Security.....	192	199	208	208
Security Detail.....	206	211	237	237
Security Operations Program.....	290	290	322	322
Talent Group.....	-	-	165	165
TARGET Center.....	53	60	80	80
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	243	206	-	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	2,095	2,055	2,206	2,206
E-Gov:				
Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business.....	5	11	10	10
Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan.....	21	27	27	27
E-Rulemaking.....	70	113	149	124
Financial Management Line of Business.....	4	4	4	4
Geospatial Line of Business.....	38	38	38	38
Benefits.gov.....	70	71	66	69
Grants.gov.....	32	62	60	62
Human Resources Line of Business.....	14	14	13	13
Hiring Assessment Tool.....	-	11	-	-
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	870	1,395	1,301	1,159
Total, E-Gov.....	1,124	1,745	1,667	1,506
Agency Total.....	82,678	84,632	85,008	85,961

ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES

Table RD-6. Advertising Expenditures (thousands of dollars)

Item	2022 Actual	2022 Actual	2023	2023	2024	2024
	Number of Contracts	Dollars Obligated	Estimated Number of Contracts	Estimated Dollars Obligated	Estimated Number of Contracts	Estimated Dollars Obligated
Total Contracts for Advertising Services....	1	\$20	1	\$20	1	\$20
Contracts for Advertising Services to Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Small Businesses.....	1	20	1	20	1	20
Contracts for Advertising Services to Women-Owned and Minority-Owned Small Businesses.....	1	20	1	20	1	20

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

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

1 *Salaries and Expenses*
 2
 3 For necessary expenses for carrying out the administration and implementation of Rural Development programs,
 4 including activities with institutions concerning the development and operation of agricultural cooperatives; and for
 5 cooperative agreements; [~~\$351,087,000~~]\$527,182,000: *Provided*, That of the amount made available under this
 6 heading, up to [~~\$5,000,000~~]\$32,000,000, to remain available until September 30, [2024]2025, shall be for the Rural
 7 Partners Network activities of the Department of Agriculture, and may be transferred to other agencies of the
 8 Department for such purpose, consistent with the missions and authorities of such agencies: *Provided further*, That
 9 of the amount made available under this heading, no less than [~~\$135,000,000~~]\$125,000,000, to remain available
 10 until expended, shall be used for information technology expenses: *Provided further*, That of the amount made
 11 available under this heading, up to \$1,000,000 shall be for the administration of the Rural Voucher Program:
 12 *Provided further*, That of the amount made available under this heading, up to \$13,000,000 shall be for program
 13 loan costs for the Water and Waste program account, Rural Housing Insurance Fund account and the Electric and
 14 Telecommunications program account: *Provided further*, That of the amount made available under this heading, up
 15 to \$4,000,000 shall be for loan packager costs for the Single Family Housing Direct program: *Provided further*, That
 16 notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds appropriated under this heading may be used for advertising and
 17 promotional activities that support Rural Development programs: *Provided further*, That in addition to any other
 18 funds appropriated for purposes authorized by section 502(i) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1472(i)), any
 19 amounts collected under such section, as amended by this Act, will immediately be credited to this account and will
 20 remain available until expended for such purposes.

Change Description

The first change (line 10 to 15 of paragraph 1) adds language for set asides for the administration of the voucher program, for program loan cost expenses (PLCE) that will be administered in the salaries and expenses account. PLCE support contract directly relate to the origination and servicing of credit reform loans, and for a contract that will be doing the physical inspections of Section 515 Direct loans properties.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table RD-7. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2023	\$351,087,000
Change in Appropriation	+ 176,095,000
Budget Estimate, 2024	<u>527,182,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table RD-8. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTE)

Item	2021 Actual	FTE	2022 Actual	FTE	2023 Estimated	FTE	2024 Estimated	FTE	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Salaries and Expenses (Direct Appropriation).....	\$264,024	1,549	\$295,285	1,725	\$211,087	1,731	\$352,182	2,131	+\$141,095	+400	(1)
IT Cost	-	-	-	-	135,000	-	125,000	-	-10,000	-	(2)
Rural Partners Network (RPN)	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	-	32,000	-	+27,000	-	(3)
Voucher Administrative Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	+1,000	-	(4)
Section 502 loan packaging	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,000	-	+4,000	-	(5)
Program Loan Cost Expenses (PLCE).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,000	-	+13,000	-	(6)
Goodfellow	9,815	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salaries and Exp. (from RBS, RHS, RUS approp.)	449,992	2,856	449,992	2,885	449,992	2,885	449,992	2,885	-	-	-
Program Admin. (transferred from other accounts)	49,878	-	76,708	-	44,786	47	22,243	47	-22,543	-	-
Subtotal	773,709	4,405	826,985	4,610	845,865	4,663	999,417	5,063	+153,552	+400	-
Mandatory Appropriations:											
BioBased Market Program (Farm Bill).....	2,829	-	2,829	3	2,829	3	2,829	3	-	-	-
Subtotal	2,829	-	2,829	3	2,829	3	2,829	3	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Approp	776,538	4,405	829,814	4,613	848,694	4,666	1,002,246	5,066	+153,552	+400	-
Add back:											
Rescission, Transfers In and Out	-512,685	-2,856	-526,700	-2,885	-494,778	-2,932	-472,235	-2,932	+22,543	-	-
Sequestration	171	-	171	-	171	-	171	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation	264,024	1,549	303,285	1,728	354,087	1,734	530,182	2,134	+176,095	+400	-
Transfers In:											
BioBased Market Program (Farm Bill).....	3,000	-	3,000	-	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	-	-
Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP) COVID (mandatory).....	3,000	-	1,450	-	1,450	-	1,450	-	-	-	-
LAMP (mandatory)	3,973	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interchange from Water and Waste	-	-	33,085	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American Rescue Plan.....	26,000	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Broadband/Reconnect Administration Account	17,000	-	25,916	-	19,352	47	17,793	47	-1,559	-	-
Broadband/Reconnect Technical Assistance Account.	-	-	2,433	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – RURAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Item	2021 Actual	FTE	2022 Actual	FTE	2023 Estimated	FTE	2024 Estimated	FTE	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
BIL Broadband/Reconnect TA Account.....	-	-	-	-	20,984	-	-	-	-20,984	-	-
Carryover for IT purposes.....	-1,685	-	10,824	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural Electrification and Telecommunication Loans ..	33,175	213	33,270	213	33,270	213	33,270	213	-	-	-
Rural Housing Insurance Program.....	412,254	2,613	412,254	2,643	412,254	2,643	412,254	2,643	-	-	-
Intermediate Relending Program	4,468	29	4,468	29	4,468	29	4,468	29	-	-	-
Total Transfers In	501,185	2,856	526,700	2,885	494,778	2,932	472,235	2,932	-22,543	-	-
Transfers Out:											
Lapsing Balances transferred between Expired and Unexpired	11,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....	11,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration	-171	-	-171	-	-171	-	-171	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	10,410	-	3,313	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	17,468	-	44,778	-	68,125	-	18,670	-	-49,455	-	-
Total Available	804,416	4,405	877,905	4,613	916,819	4,666	1,020,916	5,066	+104,097	+400	-
Lapsing Balances	-7,554	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lapsing Balances transferred between Expired and Unexpired	1,685	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	-44,778	-	-68,125	-	-18,670	-	-21,207	-	-2,537	-	-
Total Obligations	753,769	4,405	809,780	4,613	898,149	4,666	999,709	5,066	+101,560	+400	-

Note: The details associated with Supplemental appropriations provided to the Office of the Secretary, but implemented in this account, is found in the USDA Budget Summary and is not reflected above.

Note: The project statement does not contain reimbursables.

Table RD-9. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTE)

Item	2021 Actual	FTE	2022 Actual	FTE	2023 Estimated	FTE	2024 Estimated	FTE	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Salaries and Expenses.....	\$261,024	1,549	\$196,529	1,725	\$215,887	1,731	\$347,382	2,131	+\$131,495	+400
IT Cost.....	-	-	97,263	-	130,200	-	129,800	-	-400	-
Rural Partners Network (RPN).....	-	-	2,893	-	5,000	-	32,000	-	+27,000	-
Voucher Administrative Costs.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	+1,000	-
Section 502 packaging.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,000	-	+4,000	-
Program Loan Cost Expenses (PLCE).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,000	-	+13,000	-
Goodfellow.....	-	-	1,866	-	1,500	-	-	-	-1,500	-
Placemaking Innovation Challenge Grants.....	3,000	-	3,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interchange.....	-	-	13,000	-	20,085	-	-	-	-20,085	-
Broadband/Reconnect Administration Account.....	17,000	-	25,916	-	19,352	47	17,793	47	-1,559	-
Broadband/Reconnect Technical Assistance Account.....	-	-	2,433	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BIL Broadband/Reconnect TA Account.....	-	-	-	-	20,984	-	-	-	-	-
IT Expenses.....	11,500	-	9,949	-	-	-	463	-	+463	-
Rural Electrification & Telecommunications Loans.....	33,270	213	33,270	213	33,270	213	33,270	213	-	-
Rural Housing Insurance Program.....	412,254	2,613	412,254	2,643	412,254	2,643	412,254	2,643	-	-
Intermediary Relending Program.....	4,468	29	4,468	29	4,468	29	4,468	29	-	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations.....	742,516	4,404	803,441	4,610	863,000	4,663	995,430	5,063	+132,430	+400
Mandatory Obligations:										
Biobased Market Program.....	2,437	-	2,829	-	2,829	-	2,829	-	-	-
Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP) COVID ...	3,000	-	259	3	2,688	3	-	3	-2,688	-
LAMP.....	3,973	-	594	-	6,005	-	1,450	-	-4,555	-
Subtotal Mand Obligations.....	9,410	-	3,682	3	11,522	3	4,279	3	-7,243	-
Supplemental Obligations:										
American Rescue Plan.....	1,843	1	2,657	-	21,711	-	-	-	-21,711	-
Subtotal Supp Obligations.....	1,843	1	2,657	-	21,711	-	-	-	-21,711	-
Offsetting Collections:										
GUS fees.....	-	-	-	-	1,916	-	-	-	-1,916	-
Subtotal Offsetting Collections.....	-	-	-	-	1,916	-	-	-	-1,916	-
Total Obligations.....	753,769	4,405	809,780	4,613	898,149	4,666	999,709	5,066	+101,560	+400
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances.....	7,554	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lapsing Balances transferred.....	-1,685	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balances Available, EOY:										
Information Technology.....	5,045	-	-	-	4,800	-	-	-	-4,800	-
LAMP.....	-	-	7,243	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2024 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – RURAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Item	2021 Actual	FTE	2022 Actual	FTE	2023 Estimated	FTE	2024 Estimated	FTE	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
S&E No Year	15,365	-	-	-	13,149	-	16,036	-	+2,887	-
American Rescue Plan	24,368	-	21,711	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goodfellow	-	-	7,923	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interchange	-	-	20,085	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Fees	-	-	11,163	-	721	-	5,171	-	+4,450	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY	44,778	-	68,125	-	18,670	-	21,207	-	+2,537	-
Total Available	804,416	4,405	877,905	4,613	916,819	4,666	1,020,916	5,066	+104,097	+400
Less:										
Total Transfers In	-501,185	-2,856	-526,700	-2,885	-494,778	-2,932	-472,235	-2,932	+22,543	-
Total Transfers Out	-11,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration	171	-	171	-	171	-	171	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other	-10,410	-	-3,313	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-17,468	-	-44,778	-	-68,125	-	-18,670	-	+49,455	-
Total Appropriation	264,024	1,549	303,285	1,728	354,087	1,734	530,182	2,134	+176,095	+400

Note: The details associated with Supplemental obligations provided to the Office of the Secretary, but implemented in this account, is found in the USDA Budget Summary and is not reflected above.

Note: The project statement does not contain reimbursables

JUSTIFICATIONS**Salaries and Expenses**

When rural people thrive, America thrives. Rural Development (RD) connects business owners to new markets; helps power people with modern infrastructure; and supports opportunities for people to build brighter futures in rural America. RD partners with communities on the ground so every rural community can access its programs successfully. RD supports the people of rural America – whether they are moving to a new town, transitioning jobs, taking care of their homes and loved ones, or experiencing other life events – because rural communities are a place everyone should feel comfortable calling home.

Congress has entrusted RD to invest in rural communities and has increased RD’s program funding levels every year. However, RD’s portfolio increased 85 percent in the last decade but its staffing levels decreased by 30 percent. RD staff provide rural assistance that reflects the needs of local communities.

RD is at historically low staffing levels when compared to its loan portfolio. With an increase in workload and servicing expectations, RD may be unable to meet mission responsibilities and customer expectations if it does not receive adequate funding to improve its automated loan and accounting systems and increase staff to allocate for highest priority needs. Increased staffing resources would allow RD to meet the growing priorities in critical areas that have a direct effect on the mission area’s ability to be sustainable, relevant, and results-oriented in delivering much-needed programs and services across rural America. To ensure that RD will be able to deliver on this proposal, we are taking steps to enhance RD’s Human Resources capacity through targeted hiring and contract support actions that will significantly improve RD’s ability to recruit, on-board, and retain new staff. Current data driven staffing strategies include analyzing timekeeping records reflecting the various programs and activities of RD staff to determine the staffing levels necessary to support program delivery at the State level. In 2022, RD finalized an analysis on the optimal number of FTEs the field staff will need in order to deliver the programs. The analysis concluded that 6,800 FTEs is the optimal FTEs level to deliver the funding provided by Congress and the underwriting processes.

RD’s programs need more flexibility to serve the unique challenges of all rural communities. Without additional investment in program delivery support, rural communities will be unable to access RD opportunities.

A modern RD will process loans and grants for rural America faster, help small businesses access new and better markets, grow modern infrastructure, promote a healthy environment and affordable housing, and create equitable access to quality healthcare, jobs, and capital, but modernization requires an investment in RD. RD programs may not have the technical capabilities needed to deliver appropriate products and services to their customers if IT systems do not align with business needs. This could lead to declining customer experiences and overall diminished capacity to deliver its mission. RD has IT modernization projects that would move the agency to a more bank-like environment. These IT projects would allow applicants to apply for services online, which would eliminate the paper application process, would allow borrowers to access their loan information directly, and could streamline funding requests and reduce manual processes. The 2024 budget request continues this effort.

As an example of how low staff levels negatively affect program operations, in 2022 over 1.1 million applications were received by the RD Agencies and the Servicing Office (SO). RHS received 103,645 applications across its direct, guaranteed, and grant programs. RUS received 1,312 applications; 870 were for their Water and Environmental programs. RBCS received 6,342 applications. The SO serviced over 1 million loans and grants for customers across all the RD agencies, with a staffing level of 520 out of 576 authorized FTEs. SO’s FTE levels for the Single-Family Housing Direct (SFHD) Program were insufficient to meet production demands in 2022, as approximately 34 customer service representatives responded to over 471,000 calls from the 2.2 million call attempts from borrowers. Further, SO’s collections for the SFHD program in 2022 totaled \$2.323 billion and it processed 1,871,047 payments. Only 11 out of 16 SO FTEs to oversee payment processing were on board as of 9/30/22; limitations on staffing levels make it very difficult to manage the day-to-day workload (average daily collection is \$2.2 million), or reduce the backlogs, because many of the processes are manual. As a result, unapplied cash payments generate incorrect Credit Bureau reporting for our customers and Congressional inquiries from constituents. This is in addition to the backlog of 4,000+ correspondence items. Moreover, SO manages approximately 10,000 MFH program servicing actions annually with authorized FTE levels of 22. Lack of funding to support additional staff resulted in ending 2022 with over 2,000 transactions in backlog. These delayed processing actions can often adversely impact borrowers’ progress in closing their loans and/or transferring ownership of the properties.

The 2023 enacted appropriations included funding that would allow RD to maintain staff at the 2022 level and fund essential IT development projects to support its mission. The 2024 budget request supports higher staffing levels and

supports funding for IT modernization efforts to support delivering programs to underserved, unserved, and disadvantaged communities. Because of the lack of sufficient funding in prior years, RD's top two enterprise risks are staffing levels, including hiring and retention, and IT not meeting program needs.

RD is committed to securing environmental justice and spurring economic opportunity for underserved communities that have been historically marginalized, overburdened by pollution, and have experienced underinvestment in essential services. In line with Executive Order 14008, Rural Development will take proactive actions to work towards ensuring 40 percent of the benefits of climate and clean energy investments are provided to underserved communities. These actions will include an examination of the activities of key programs to determine whether those programs' benefits have occurred for underserved communities. In 2024, RD will continue to track program expenditures that flow to underserved communities and identify metrics that will help track how program benefits improve outcomes for underserved communities.

The commitment and resources RD brings to rural people and communities across the country help drive economic security and prosperity. RD connects business owners to new markets; helps power people with modern infrastructure; and supports opportunities for people to build brighter futures in rural America. It also supports rural prosperity by investing in high-speed internet access, affordable rural housing, rural businesses, and jobs of the future; water and wastewater systems; and rural healthcare. RD Mission Area request aligns with the following USDA Strategic Plan's Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities of Strategic

Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions) by supporting rural and tribal clean electricity generation and energy efficiency.

Goal 2: Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous

Strategic Objective 2.2: Build Resilient Food Systems, Infrastructure, and Supply Chain by assessing the impact of the Department's Build Back Better and American Rescue Plan investments on key outcomes using grant performance metrics for local and regional food systems (such as partnerships developed, business development changes, diversification and expanded market development), and the supply chain (such as feasibility studies conducted, value chain enhancements made, increased small food business activity, number of new market access points established).

Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

Strategic Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural and Tribal Communities.

Strategic Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural and Tribal Communities.

Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA

Strategic Objective 6.1: Foster a culture of civil rights, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, transparency, and accountability.

Strategic Objective 6.2: Establish a customer-centric, inclusive, high-performing workforce that is representative of America and the communities we serve.

Strategic Objective 6.3: Promote USDA operational excellence through better use of technology and shared solutions.

Although RD's mission area agencies support Strategic Goals 1 through 5, the Salaries and Expenses account focuses on supporting Strategic Goal 6.

The 2024 budget request continues its focus on the priorities of the Administration: COVID-19/Economic Recovery, Climate Change, and racial equity. The request includes additional staff to support the Administration's focus on new construction for the Multi-family Housing Direct and Guarantee Loan programs and supporting the continued

implementation of the Rural Partners Network (RPN), an effort started in 2022. RD will accomplish its mission by focusing efforts on:

- **Marketing and Outreach:** These functions are delivered through a field structure of 477 state, local, and area offices. The budget request replenishes state staffing levels to achieve Rural Development’s core mission of community development through technical assistance, outreach, and community-level engagement. In addition, the funding requested for RPN is for highly specialized staff that will be mostly located at the field level.
- **Loan Origination and Underwriting:** The budget request includes critical staff that can originate loans, administer grants, and ensure the proper underwriting of program funds. The staff make sure regulations and credit standards align with strategic goals, priorities, and mission objectives.
- **Servicing:** An essential function of RD is to service the loans that it obligates. After borrowers receive the loans and grants servicing begins. Staff service loans and grants by monitoring lending activity for guaranteed loans to ensure that borrowers follow regulations and by auditing lending records to ensure fair practices to rural borrowers. Servicing actions for direct loans include managing payments and escrow accounts, processing foreclosures, and overall evaluation of portfolio performance. As of the end of 2022, RD’s portfolio was almost \$232 billion, with more than 1.2 million guaranteed and direct loans. Rural Development’s portfolio increases by five percent each year. By 2024, it’s estimated the portfolio will include \$256 billion in outstanding debt.
- **Risk Management and Mitigation:** Rural Development’s Risk Office provides a formal framework that allows RD’s Senior Leadership to assess mission area risks that may negatively affect RD across its functional areas. These mission area risk assessments are data driven and help inform Rural Development’s budget process, internal control assessments, strategic planning, Information Technology investments, and other key decision-making processes.

Currently, Rural Development has six mission area risks ranked as Tier 1 (high level):

- 1) IT system functionality meeting program needs
- 2) Staffing levels/organizational structure
- 3) Hiring and Retention
- 4) Records Management
- 5) Environmental Reviews
- 6) COVID-19 Portfolio Risks

IT system functionality meeting program needs ranks as the highest risk and has since the inception of the enterprise risk management process in 2017. These risks indicate areas of concern regarding RD’s ability to meet its strategic mission. RD Risk Office also houses the Special Assets Unit (SAU), which supports the commercial and community programs by monitoring borrower financial status and managing borrower accounts with delinquencies over 90 days. The SAU operates under existing agency regulations, using a consistent approach with standardized mitigation tools, to assist distressed borrowers, maximize debt recovery, while also considering the impacts to a community.

The 2024 budget also focuses on deploying the RD programs and services in support of Executive Order (EO) 14008. This will support the Administration’s efforts to combat climate change and promote racial equity. The budget focuses on improving housing options for low and very low- income rural Americans by emphasizing multi-family housing new construction through the multi-family housing direct and guaranteed program. Providing affordable, sustainable, and resilient housing requires additional resources, including additional full-time employees (FTEs) who will engage in strong partnerships with state, local governments, and other Federal agencies.

Justifications of increases and decreases:

- (1) An increase of \$141,095,000 and 400 FTEs for salaries and expenses account (\$211,087,000 available in 2023).
 - a. An increase of \$30,869,000 for 2024 Pay. This increase will support an annualization of the 2023 4.6 percent Cost of Living pay increase and the 2024 5.2 percent Cost of Living pay increase. The pay increase consists of \$6.968 million for annualization of the 2023 pay increase of 4.6 percent and \$23.901 million for the 2024 pay increase of 5.2 percent. These increases help to maintain morale for RD’s current employees and support the additional FTEs requested in the budget. RD’s workforce is essential for delivering RD programs, improving access to other Federal benefits and enhancing the economic capacity of rural Americans. Without the additional funds, RD would need to reduce other services in order to maintain the labor force.

- b. An increase of \$61,934,000 for salaries and benefits related to 400 FTEs increase from 2023 enacted level. This increase will support a total FTE level of 5,100. This funding supports an additional 400 FTEs that are needed for delivering the program level requested, providing excellent customer services in rural areas, supporting a more of all Federal government approach to delivering funding and services in distressed communities, such as communities of color and energy communities impacted by the transition from coal to clean energy sources, and servicing current and future portfolio. The increase assumes an average salary and benefit cost of above \$134,000. Without the additional funding RD will not be able to support the increased program level requested in the budget and continue supporting rural borrowers and customers.
- c. An increase of \$2,000,000 for awards. Awards are a tool for motivating the workforce. Because of the increase in workforce, additional funding will be needed in order to maintain moral and reward employees for the extra mile they are committed to do when servicing rural communities and supporting State and local offices by providing the administrative support for the field offices to accomplish their mission.
- d. An increase of \$1,597,000 for non-GSA Rent. Rural Development will have an increase in non-GSA rents. This cost reflects inflationary costs and additional costs associated with new cleaning protocols and increases in rental costs. This increase does not anticipate RD acquiring any additional space in 2024.
- e. An increase of \$300,000 for establishing the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant communities. Executive Order 14008 called for Federal investment to support the economic revitalization of coal, oil, gas, and power plant communities. It also established the Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization (Energy Communities) to advance the policy set in the Executive Order. The IWG on Energy Communities is co-chaired by the Director of the NEC and the National Climate Advisor and administered by the Secretary of Energy via the Director of the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL). Energy Communities programs and initiatives are an Administration priority, and IWG agencies should anticipate a ramp up in activities that directly support or could support these communities. IWG Agencies are asked to prioritize funding for programs that:
- i. Provide support for workers dislocated because of closures in the energy economy;
 - ii. Expand job training in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and reclamation; and
 - iii. Build capacity through field staff and technical assistance to support affected communities.

USDA is also being asked to provide funding for administration and capacity building activities associated the IWG, which will include but not be limited to support for research and analysis to inform pre-decisional investments, interagency coordination, and stakeholder engagement activities. These activities are necessary for the IWG to pursue its short- and long-term goals associated with supporting energy communities in the transition to a clean energy economy. RD budget includes \$300,000 for IWG operations, which reflects a share of the costs required to support the IWG.

- f. An increase of \$4,000,000 for a contract to oversee the inspection of Section 514 and 515 properties. To ensure that the Section 514 and Section 515 portfolio is adequately maintained, MFH conducts physical inspections at least once every three years. These activities are currently performed by MFH's Loan Specialists in its Field Operations Division. The 2024 request proposes to enter into a professional services contract for these inspection activities, which require specialized expertise and are typically performed by independent third-party professionals across both public and private sector multifamily portfolios. Using contracted expert services to perform inspections provides MFH's Field Operations staff with the information they need to fulfill the inherently governmental function of making compliance and enforcement decisions. It also appropriately bifurcates the functions of deficiency identification and deficiency cure to ensure the integrity and quality of each of these functions. The \$4 million will be used to perform oversight and monitoring of the physical condition of the Sections 514 and 515 portfolio.

- g. An increase of 40,395,000 for support contracts. The 2024 requests an increase for non-IT contractual support services essential for RD operations. For example, RD contracts out legal services for all the three agencies' programs, mail services to serve the housing borrowers, maintenance services for non-GSA locations as well as maintenance services for real estate own properties of single -family housing while they are in foreclosure. The increases also include contracts that support Credit Reform implementation and servicing.
- (2) A decrease of \$10,000,000 for IT costs (\$135,000,000 available in 2023). The RD portfolio is supported by over 100 IT systems built over 30 years on disparate platforms, technologies, and software in response to specific program needs.

Under this budget request, RD will continue to modernize its IT systems to avert system failures, remediate cybersecurity vulnerabilities, meet program priorities, and make RD's loans and grants more accessible to rural Americans. RD continues funding for IT modernization projects designed to move the agency to a more bank-like environment where applicants can apply for services online (eliminating the paper application process), borrowers can access their loan information directly, and funding requests can become streamlined, thus reducing manual processes. The requested decrease allows RD to invest in IT systems that will support its mission and will provide the necessary support for RD borrowers. The 2024 budget will support the continuation of retiring the legacy systems such as SURPASS, PLAS and AMAs, to fully implement section 502 Delegated authority, improve customer portal, implementation of OneRD that supports the guaranteed programs, the National Default management system, and other IT systems that support document management. The decrease is due to gaining efficiencies and reduce costs for Operations and Management of the systems.

- (3) An increase of \$27,000,000 for the Rural Partners Network (RPN) (\$5,000,000 available in 2023). With the 2024 budget request, RD will expand to additional States and territories and increase engagement with other Federal agencies. With the additional funding RD will be partnering with State and local institution to develop their individual solutions for improving their social economic standing. These are vital resources that will enhance the lives of underserved communities, including communities of color and energy communities. RPN is an alliance of Federal agencies and civic partners working to expand rural prosperity and spur inclusive, sustainable economic growth. Distressed rural communities struggle to get financial or technical assistance from highly competitive programs. RPN introduces a new way of doing business by providing a whole-of-government approach to improve access to government resources, staffing and tools. Participating agencies designate key points of contact who focus specifically on rural strategies, improving visibility and attention to rural issues. To a small number of select communities, RPN provides deep hands-on technical assistance through federal staff embedded those places to assist community networks navigate federal programs. RPN aims to build on this Technical Assistance (TA) provision, by establishing regional TA hubs that would be used to deliver culturally competent technical assistance to lower capacity, underserved rural communities throughout the US, so that they can access federal resources through ARPA, IJJA, IRA and other programs. These TA hubs would leverage partnerships with national and regional intermediary TA providers with skills and expertise in regionally appropriate sectoral strategies, federal program navigation, and predevelopment assistance. These TA hubs would serve as a central place where distressed rural communities could get a variety of technical assistance types as a "one-stop-shop" to help build their capacity and ultimately strengthen their ability to access federal funds locally and regionally. These TA hubs are an important piece of the RPN strategy given that embedded federal staff can only be deployed in a select number of communities.

These TA hubs will:

- a. Launch regionally based technical assistance networks through USDA investment that (a) simplify and ensure access to information, training, and appropriate and adequate technical assistance for underserved and vulnerable communities; (b) strengthen key regional intermediaries and rural development hubs; and (c) improve coordination and coverage.
- b. Potentially partner with foundations and other private capital sources to leverage USDA's investment by strengthening these networks and making additional resources (up to \$50 million) available through regionally based channels, to enable distressed communities to access technical assistance and capacity strengthening.

- c. Enhance the navigational support provided by federal staff through the Rural Partners Network by enabling community access to appropriate technical assistance and capacity-strengthening services.

With the funding previously provided, the RPN has identified additional community networks in Nevada, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, West Virginia and Wisconsin, and will be working to fine tune the targeted areas of focus in Alaska. RD will continue hiring staff to support this effort based on the funding availability. USDA is continuing to build out Rural.gov with the next phase of development focused on network specific pages and more specific information and tools on accessing federal programs. USDA is continuing to work through facilitation of Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGA) with Tribal organizations in Arizona, with a specific focus on hiring and strategic planning. USDA is also in the plan development/business needs assessment phase of a collaboration tool that would establish a tool by which federal agencies and community networks can efficiently share information and track progress of community-driven goals such as projects, technical assistance, leadership development, and more. This collaboration tool is tentatively slated to be hosted on the Salesforce platform with a targeted implementation date by the end of 2023.

- (4) An increase of \$1,000,000 for the Administration of the Voucher program (\$0 available in 2023). The 2024 budget is requesting \$38 million to support 7,450 vouchers. The voucher program needs to be administrated, to the extent possible, like the Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8 voucher. The \$1 million will fund a contract to issue and monitor vouchers since RD does not have a network of Housing Authorities to support this program.
- (5) An increase of \$4,000,000 for Single Family Housing Packaging costs (\$0 available in 2023). The 2024 budget is requesting \$4 million for a contract that will support Section 502 Single Family Housing Direct loan program and Section 504 Low Income Repair Direct loan program. This funding will cover these two program packaging fees. Packaging fees are currently passed onto the low-income borrower. This requirement reduces the participation from both applicants and loan packagers who do not wish to pass on additional fees to their low-income customers, particularly in Section 504. Absorbing the packaging fees will increase the use of loan packagers, who are an important partner in delivering SFH Direct loan programs. In addition, the low-income borrower will benefit from it as the fees will not be passed along to them.
- (6) An increase of \$13,000,000 for Program Loan Cost Expenses (PLCE) (\$0 available in 2023). PLCE will be also for appraisals, inspections and environmental reviews for the Water and Waste program and loan origination and servicing actions (foreclosures) for the Single-Family Housing portfolio. PLCE funds are used to administer the contract support need and will be used to support the expected growth in the loan portfolio in 2024. These costs are directly related to origination of new loans as well as performing the fiduciary responsibility for servicing these loans.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTE

Table RD-10. Geographic Breakdown of Discretionary Obligations and FTE (thousands of dollars, FTE)

State/Territory/Country	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Alabama.....	\$5,637	81	\$5,753	75	\$5,955	82	\$7,069	89
Alaska.....	3,052	36	2,834	29	3,015	28	3,578	30
Arizona.....	3,921	51	4,140	57	4,255	58	5,051	63
Arkansas.....	5,579	82	6,065	71	6,234	70	7,399	76
California.....	9,924	120	10,452	120	10,813	116	12,836	126
Colorado.....	3,370	42	3,621	61	3,807	61	4,519	66
Connecticut.....	501	9	547	12	562	15	667	16
Delaware.....	2,723	36	3,112	37	3,591	36	4,263	39
District of Columbia.....	458,168	553	504,047	334	540,581	298	610,442	326
Florida.....	5,967	84	6,295	110	6,491	122	7,704	132
Georgia.....	6,844	95	7,355	124	7,648	135	9,078	146
Hawaii.....	3,175	37	3,684	32	3,857	32	4,579	35
Idaho.....	3,739	50	3,736	46	3,840	46	4,558	50
Illinois.....	5,818	86	5,876	240	6,053	258	7,185	280
Indiana.....	3,919	54	4,230	69	4,396	74	5,218	80
Iowa.....	6,055	89	6,633	89	6,921	96	8,216	104
Kansas.....	3,158	47	3,351	57	3,452	56	4,098	61
Kentucky.....	6,065	92	6,694	86	6,936	93	8,233	101
Louisiana.....	4,513	68	5,116	75	5,344	77	6,343	84
Maine.....	3,554	53	4,137	53	4,347	51	5,159	55
Maryland.....	367	6	341	125	350	124	416	135
Massachusetts.....	2,967	39	3,142	41	3,234	46	3,839	50
Michigan.....	7,748	111	8,630	106	8,977	111	10,656	120
Minnesota.....	5,763	79	6,163	84	6,395	85	7,591	92
Mississippi.....	7,253	102	7,628	90	7,940	87	9,425	94
Missouri.....	68,504	717	75,764	677	77,875	662	92,439	721
Montana.....	3,442	50	3,798	49	3,911	51	4,642	55
Nebraska.....	3,187	45	3,553	47	3,776	46	4,482	50
Nevada.....	2,103	25	2,117	28	2,176	32	2,583	34
New Hampshire.....	1,415	20	1,484	15	1,525	15	1,810	16
New Jersey.....	2,336	31	2,727	36	2,812	37	3,338	40
New Mexico.....	3,073	39	3,705	43	3,808	44	4,520	48
New York.....	5,836	92	6,297	87	6,580	86	7,811	93
North Carolina.....	9,499	128	9,497	133	9,870	132	11,716	143
North Dakota.....	2,773	39	3,253	35	3,348	34	3,974	37
Ohio.....	5,155	79	5,891	79	6,055	85	7,187	92
Oklahoma.....	4,226	64	4,673	64	4,945	66	5,869	72
Oregon.....	3,707	50	4,044	55	4,156	53	4,934	58
Pennsylvania.....	6,367	89	7,064	91	7,321	96	8,690	105
Puerto Rico.....	4,066	66	3,977	54	4,088	52	4,852	57
Rhode Island.....	165	4	236	3	243	3	288	3
South Carolina.....	5,631	80	5,719	89	5,897	88	7,000	96
South Dakota.....	3,190	47	3,207	53	3,433	53	4,075	58
Tennessee.....	7,335	105	7,331	101	7,754	110	9,204	119
Texas.....	10,422	155	11,003	177	11,311	188	13,426	205
Utah.....	2,259	30	2,733	36	2,809	35	3,334	38
Vermont.....	2,520	37	2,314	24	2,411	22	2,862	24
Virgin Islands.....	318	3	431	4	443	4	526	4
Virginia.....	5,526	78	6,093	163	6,274	165	7,447	179
Washington.....	4,359	62	4,465	68	4,601	69	5,462	75
West Virginia.....	4,052	59	4,530	60	4,665	59	5,538	64
Wisconsin.....	4,534	65	4,700	82	4,921	85	5,841	92
Wyoming.....	1,906	29	2,124	26	2,183	23	2,591	25
Western Pacific.....	1,120	15	711	12	731	11	867	12
Obligations.....	748,810	4,401	817,019	4,614	864,916	4,663	995,430	5,065
Bal. Available, EOY.....	7,500	-	-	-	4,800	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	756,310	4,401	817,019	4,614	869,716	4,663	995,430	5,065

Table RD-11. Geographic Breakdown of Mandatory Obligations and FTE (thousands of dollars, FTE)

State/Territory/Country	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Alabama.....	-	-	\$41	-	\$335	-	-	-
Alaska.....	-	-	112	-	823	-	-	-
California.....	-	-	68	-	556	-	-	-
Colorado.....	-	-	92	-	695	-	-	-
Delaware.....	-	-	382	-	3,125	-	-	-
District of Columbia.....	\$4,980	4	3,533	2	11,906	3	\$4,279	1
Florida.....	-	-	22	-	166	-	-	-
Georgia.....	-	-	88	-	706	-	-	-
Hawaii.....	-	-	70	-	573	-	-	-
Illinois.....	-	-	15	-	108	-	-	-
Indiana.....	-	-	47	-	385	-	-	-
Iowa.....	-	-	107	-	832	-	-	-
Kansas.....	-	-	9	-	74	-	-	-
Kentucky.....	-	-	66	-	454	-	-	-
Louisiana.....	-	-	84	-	680	-	-	-
Maine.....	-	-	93	-	754	-	-	-
Massachusetts.....	-	-	5	-	41	-	-	-
Michigan.....	-	-	104	-	851	-	-	-
Minnesota.....	-	-	61	-	485	-	-	-
Mississippi.....	-	-	97	-	794	-	-	-
Missouri.....	-	-	5	-	41	-	-	-
Montana.....	-	-	22	-	72	-	-	-
Nebraska.....	-	-	127	-	992	-	-	-
New Jersey.....	-	-	9	-	74	-	-	-
New Mexico.....	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	-
New York.....	-	-	105	-	855	-	-	-
North Carolina.....	-	-	110	-	867	-	-	-
North Dakota.....	-	-	4	-	33	-	-	-
Ohio.....	-	-	25	-	25	-	-	-
Oklahoma.....	-	-	138	-	1,125	-	-	-
Oregon.....	-	-	44	-	44	-	-	-
Pennsylvania.....	-	-	59	-	483	-	-	-
South Carolina.....	-	-	31	-	167	-	-	-
South Dakota.....	-	-	133	-	1,084	-	-	-
Tennessee.....	-	-	214	-	1,740	-	-	-
Texas.....	-	-	2	-	16	-	-	-
Vermont.....	-	-	32	-	262	-	-	-
Virginia.....	-	-	15	-	94	-	-	-
Washington.....	-	-	12	-	98	-	-	-
West Virginia.....	-	-	12	-	77	-	-	-
Wisconsin.....	-	-	101	-	733	-	-	-
Obligations.....	4,980	4	6,305	2	33,233	3	4,279	1
Total, Available.....	4,980	4	6,305	2	33,233	3	4,279	1

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table RD-12. Classification by Objects Discretionary (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.	\$179,003	\$40,747	\$41,236	\$43,769
	Personnel Compensation, Field	210,134	372,794	389,860	442,377
11	Total personnel compensation	389,137	413,541	431,096	486,146
12	Personal benefits	145,570	162,070	170,638	192,109
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	-	530	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	534,707	576,141	601,734	678,255
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	3,260	6,823	10,329	10,329
22.0	Transportation of things	-	379	-	-
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	15,707	18,918	21,517	20,607
23.2	Rental payments to others	14,792	14,756	16,436	18,943
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	4,050	3,382	4,573	4,573
24.0	Printing and reproduction	731	786	493	493
25	Other contractual services	-	-	-	-
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	55,611	55,965	86,070	125,231
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	1,344	57,196	5,098	19,098
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	23,915	6,604	22,762	23,797
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	-	127	19	19
25.5	Research and development contracts	15,142	-	-	-
25.6	Medical Care	-	8	-	-
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	72,719	73,546	88,537	86,737
26.0	Supplies and materials	915	954	1,135	1,135
31.0	Equipment	5,673	951	4,398	4,398
32.0	Land and Structures	-	18	1,500	1,500
33.0	Investments and loans	-	3	-	-
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	243	437	315	315
43.0	Interest and Dividends	-	25	-	-
	Total, Other Objects	214,102	240,878	263,182	317,175
99.9	Total, new obligations	748,809	817,019	864,916	995,430
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)	\$2,971	\$2,861	\$2,882	\$2,882
Information Technology Investments:					
Major Investment 1					
Related Mission Area PPA #1					
11	Internal Labor	1,248	4,818	6,720	3,129
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	3,282	2,287	26,107	21,408
11	Internal Labor	3,725	155	-	-
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	9,794	8,766	13,059	11,500
	Total CLGG	18,049	16,026	45,886	36,037
Major Investment 2					
11	Internal Labor	1,507	1,507	3,421	1,963
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	12,957	3,933	24,440	19,940
	Total RLGG	14,464	5,440	27,861	21,903
Major Investment 3					
11	Internal Labor	452	452	501	513
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	3,613	2,967	4,436	8,304
	Total ECM	4,065	3,419	4,937	8,817
	Mission Area Non-Major Investment Totals	25,079	13,694	20,331	27,692
	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals	14,329	8,026	21,832	15,346
25.7	Mission Area WCF Transfers	73,155	71,927	73,300	74,094
	Total Non-Major Investment	112,563	93,647	115,463	117,132
	Total IT Investments	149,141	118,532	194,147	183,889
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$177,250	\$188,426	\$196,528	\$206,748
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$83,685	\$87,854	\$91,632	\$96,397
	Average Grade, GS Position	12.5	11.0	10.9	10.8

Table RD-13. Classification by Objects Mandatory (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Estimated	2024 Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C.	\$580	\$2,574	\$2,439	\$718
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	-	-	-	-
11	Total personnel compensation.....	580	2,574	2,439	718
12	Personal benefits	179	945	1,411	193
13	Benefits for former personnel.....	-	-	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	759	3,519	3,850	911
	Other Objects:				
21	Travel and transportation of persons	-	15	110	110
25	Advisory and assistance services.....	3,301	785	28,707	2,863
25	Other services from non-Federal sources	12	1,986	566	395
25	Other goods and services from Federal sources	908	-	-	-
	Total, Other Objects	4,221	2,786	29,383	3,368
99.9	Total, new obligations	4,980	6,305	33,233	4,279

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AGENCY-WIDE PERFORMANCE**Introduction**

USDA’s Rural Development (RD) serves a leading role in facilitating rural prosperity and economic development by financing investments in rural utilities, housing, and business investments. Building and modernizing rural America’s infrastructure is critical to create jobs and increase our country’s productivity of vital goods and services. Additionally, communities that do not invest in critical infrastructure upgrades risk losing their ability to provide clean, safe, and reliable water; electric, broadband, health, other community services; and business growth.

Continued investment will be required to close infrastructure gaps and connect rural residents and businesses to nationwide and global commerce. RD is comprised of three agencies: (1) Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) provides assistance for the development of business and industry, including small businesses, and renewable energy and energy improvement projects; (2) Rural Housing Service (RHS) provides assistance for home ownership, multi-family housing, and essential community facilities such sectors as healthcare, education, and public safety; and (3) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) provides financing to build or improve rural water and waste disposal, rural electric and telecommunications infrastructure (including broadband access).

RD is committed to driving prosperity across rural America, securing environmental justice, and spurring economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized, overburdened by pollution, and have experienced underinvestment in essential services. Through these programs administered by RD, USDA will promote job creation and economic development, increase availability of high-speed e-connectivity, strengthen community infrastructure, provide affordable and safe housing, advance education opportunities, modernize healthcare, strengthen utility infrastructure, and support workforce training and veterans’ employment to enhance quality of life in the rural communities. RD programs will also continue to expand stakeholder participation and facilitate the involvement of local, tribal, and state governments to support inclusive rural prosperity efforts.

RD’s Innovation Center (IC) spearheads RD’s efforts in Strategic Planning, Performance, Evidence and Evaluation. OBPA leads the Department in performance management including, evaluation, evidence, and chairs the Performance, Evaluation, Evidence Committee (PEEC). The IC is a member of the PEEC and works directly with OBPA, senior leadership, and actively engages with both internal and external stakeholders.

Alignment to USDA 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

The programs of RD directly support the Secretary’s Strategic Goals 5 and 6 of the Department’s Strategic Goals in the current 2022 – 2026. USDA Strategic Plan is fact-based, data-driven, and designed to promote customer focused decisions. Departmental KPIs are performance metrics aligned with the Strategic Objectives laid out in the USDA’s Strategic Plan and are monitored and evaluated during the Quarterly Strategic Reviews, the Bi-Annual Strategic Review with OMB, and included within the Annual Performance Plan and Report published by OBPA, which is responsible for achieving and measuring results with respect to the following USDA Strategic Goal and Objectives:

Strategic Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

- Objective 5.1: Improve Rural and Tribal Community Infrastructure, Including Affordable E-Connectivity, Cornerstone Community Facilities, Sustainable and Reliable Power, and Clean and Safe Water and Sewer Systems
- Objective 5.2: Boost the Financial Security of Rural and Tribal Communities
- Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural and Tribal Communities
- Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural and Tribal Communities

Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA

- Objective 6.3: Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve

Summary of Performance

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

Table RD-14 Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 5.1		2023	2024
E-Connectivity	Results	-	-
Number of Households with Potential Access to Rural Development-Funded New and/or Improved E-Connectivity Services	Target	250,000	250,000

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 5.1: Improve Rural and Tribal Community Infrastructure, Including Affordable E-Connectivity, Cornerstone Community Facilities, Sustainable and Reliable Power, and Clean and Safe Water and Sewer Systems

E-Connectivity: RD expects to continue to collaborate with the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on the joint Agency Priority Goal (APG) to ensure the further deployment of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds and annual appropriations. A funding Notice for Round 4 of ReConnect was published August 4, 2022. RD also expects to deploy technical assistance grants via cooperative agreements to support communities of need. Risks to progress include dependency on partnership with NTIA and potential staffing need to conduct environmental reviews on incoming applications.

Table RD-15 Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 5.2		2023	2024
Equity in Field-Based Programs	Results	-	-
Number of Underserved, Socially Disadvantaged, and Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Communities Engaged in Field-Based Programs	Target	230	230
Equity in Field-Based Programs	Results	-	-
Investment in Underserved, Socially Disadvantaged, and Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Communities in Field-Based Programs	Target	\$60	\$60

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 5.2: Boost the Financial Security of Rural and Tribal Communities

Equity in Field-Based Programs: There are three phases of the Equity Project: (1) Engagement, (2) Technical Assistance (TA), and (3) Investment. RD is focused on the Engagement phase, but all three phases will be fully implemented by 2024. RD plans to add new communities for the field to engage each year. RD will also leverage the Rural Partners Network (RPN) for seeking partners to provide TA. RD will, on its own and with partners, invest in equity communities. RD has incorporated funding requests in the 2024 budget draft for staff to deliver programs.

Continued engagement to all 8,000 census tracts identified in the project will be at risk without additional field staff to do the engagement and deliver RD's programs to other rural areas. Phase 2 is at risk since delivering effective TA requires continued investment in field staffing, and this is challenge across the board for RD and not just with the Equity Project.

Table RD-16 Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 5.3		2023	2024
Distressed Communities Assistance	Results	-	-
Percentage of Rural Development Assistance Directed to Distressed Communities	Target	30%	30%

Strategic Objective 5.3		2023	2024
Non-Federal Funding	Results	-	-
Percentage of Rural Development Commercial and Infrastructure Investments that Leverage Non-Federal Funding ¹	Target	N/A	40%

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural and Tribal Communities

Distressed Communities Assistance: The 2024 budget prioritizes staffing to support this KPI and RD is seeking changes in the Farm Bill that would provide RD flexibility to offer TA that matches customer need and support strategic engagement. Risks to progress in 2024 largely focus on not getting additional resources for staff and TA via the 2023 and 2024 Budgets or Farm Bill. There is also a risk to participation in our loan programs due to an increasing trend in interest rates, cost of construction materials and supply chain challenges. These challenges make it more costly for program participants to afford loans and make needed investments. Potential participants may seek more affordable financing, reduce the scope of projects or delay making investments.

Non-Federal Funding: For 2024, RD proposes to revise this KPI to focus on distressed and socially vulnerable communities. This KPI has traditionally incentivized work towards larger projects and communities that can attract more investment. This makes it harder for underserved communities – without the resources to attract lender investment or apply for multiple sources of funding – to receive investment. By modifying the KPI, RD is placing an emphasis on staff to seek out funding partners who can make projects more affordable through the blending of RD funds with other state, local or philanthropic funding. RD will use EIG’s [Distressed Communities Index](#) (zip code level) and CDC’s [Socially Vulnerable Index](#) (census tract level) to track investments in underserved communities.

Table RD-17. Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 5.4		2023	2024
Climate/Coal Decline Geographies	Results	-	-
Percentage of 25 Priority Geographies Hard-Hit by Declines in Coal Production and Consumption that are Served by Rural Development Programs ²	Target	N/A	19%

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural and Tribal Communities

Climate/Coal Decline Geographies: For 2024, RD proposes to expand the metric from the top 25 priority communities to the top 70 communities, as defined by the [Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization](#). The larger IWG list is inclusive of rural communities in other states that also need to make the transition from coal. By including them in the metric, the metric fully reflects the breadth of RD’s impact across rural territories and the availability of federal resources to these rural, coal-mining communities. RD anticipates that sustaining the current level of engagement and increasing engagement with additional communities will require more field staff.

Table RD-18. Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 6.2		2023	2024
OneRD Customer Experience	Results	-	-

¹ This measure is being revised for 2024.

² This measure is being revised for 2024.

Strategic Objective 6.2		2023	2024
Percentage of OneRD Customers Whose Application Processing Time Does Not Exceed 30 Days (Receipt to Conditional Commitment)	Target	55%	65%
OneRD Customer Experience	Results	-	-
Percentage of OneRD Program Customer (Lender) Satisfaction Survey Ratings of 4 or above	Target	65%	70%

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 6.2: Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve

OneRD Customer Experience: The 2024 budget prioritizes more funding for the B&I program, and there will be continued training to support staff in implementing OneRD Guarantees. OneRD Guarantee success is dependent on a number of factors, including increases in funding requested for B&I Guarantees to address demand, increases in funding to support adequate staff for program delivery, and Technology Office funding to develop OneRD system platform that would automate current manual and time-demanding processes.