

2020 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Office of Communications (OC) was established on June 7, 1913, when the Secretary of Agriculture established an Office of Information. The purpose of this office was to act as a news service to communicate findings and recommendations of USDA scientists and specialists to the widest audience possible. Section 7 CFR Subtitle A delegates authority for public affairs activities from the Secretary to the Director of OC. As new technology has become available and as additional segments of the public have become constituents, OC has expanded its activities to better inform and serve the public. The mission of the office, however, remains constant: to provide leadership, expertise, management, counsel and coordination that result in successful communication strategies and products that serve and engage the public in a timely, fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible manner while advancing the mission of USDA and priorities of the Administration. OC is located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2018, there were 53 full-time permanent employees, with 52 stationed in Washington, D.C.

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

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND STAFF YEARS**Table OC-1. Available Funds and Staff Years (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))**

Item	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Estimate	SY	Budget	SY
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$7,500	42	\$7,500	38	\$7,500	42	\$7,261	42
Transfers Out.....	-	-	-250	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	7,500	42	7,250	38	7,500	42	7,261	42
Lapsing Balances.....	-281	-	-303	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Obligations, OC.....	7,219	42	6,947	38	7,500	42	7,261	42
Ob. Under Other USDA Appr.:								
Agency Photo Services	54	-	39	-	40	-	40	-
Employee Details.....	136	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Executive Scheduling.....	17	-	48	-	35	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA	207	-	87	-	75	-	40	-
Total, Agriculture Appropriations	7,426	42	7,034	38	7,575	42	7,301	42
<u>Working Capital Fund a/:</u>								
Creative Media Broadcast Center (USDA).....	5,184	18	6,186	20	8,534	31	7,702	19
Creative Media and Broadcast Center (Non-USDA)..	560	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Working Capital Fund	5,744	20	6,186	20	8,534	31	7,702	19
Total, OC.....	13,170	62	13,220	58	16,109	73	15,003	61

a/ This section includes OC managed Working Capital Fund (WCF) activities. Please refer to the WCF Explanatory Notes for more details about the WCF.

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND STAFF YEARS**Table OC-6. Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Years**

Item	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
SES.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-15.....	10	-	10	10	-	10	4	-	4	4	-	4
GS-14.....	12	-	12	12	-	12	9	-	9	9	-	9
GS-13.....	11	-	11	10	-	10	10	-	10	10	-	10
GS-12.....	10	-	10	10	-	10	11	-	11	11	-	11
GS-11.....	4	-	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2
GS-9.....	4	-	4	5	-	5	4	-	4	4	-	4
GS-7.....	2	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent	55	-	55	52	1	53	41	1	42	41	1	42
Unfilled, EOY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Perm. FT												
EOY	55	-	55	52	1	53	41	1	42	41	1	42
Staff Year Est	42	-	42	57	1	58	41	1	42	41	1	42

a/ Positions shown are OC appropriated positions only. For WCF financed positions, refer to the WCF Explanatory Notes for more details.

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table OC-2. Shared Funding Projects (dollars in thousands)

Item	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Estimate	2020 Budget
Working Capital Fund:				
Administration:				
Material Management Service	\$20	\$27	\$16	\$19
Mail and Reproduction Services	94	106	140	144
Integrated Procurement Systems	7	15	17	18
Procurement Operations Services	29	42	55	47
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	1	1	1	1
Subtotal	151	191	229	229
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	193	565	475	504
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	21	20	22	23
Financial Shared Services	126	69	69	69
Subtotal	147	89	91	92
Information Technology:				
National Finance Center.....	-	-	-	-
Client Experience Center	564	420	634	643
Digital Infrastructure Services Center	662	723	311	311
Enterprise Network Services.....	46	46	85	81
Subtotal	1,272	1,189	1,030	1,035
Correspondence Management.....	2	2	-	-
Total, Working Capital Fund	1,765	2,036	1,825	1,860
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
1890's USDA Initiatives	2	-	-	-
Agency Partner Outreach	-	6	6	5
Classified National Security Information.....	1	-	-	-
Continuity of Operations Planning.....	2	-	-	-
Emergency Operations Center	2	-	-	-
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program.....	2	-	-	-
Human Resources Transformation.....	1	1	-	-
Identity Access Management	5	-	-	-
Medical Services.....	6	5	5	5
Office of Customer Experience.....	-	2	2	3
People's Garden.....	1	-	-	-
Personnel and Document Security	-	2	2	2
Personnel Security Branch	2	-	-	-
Security Detail	3	4	3	3
Security Operations.....	-	8	7	7
TARGET Center	1	1	1	1
USDA 1994 Program.....	1	-	-	-
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services	-	-	-	4
Virtual University	1	1	-	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	30	30	26	30
E-Gov:				
Enterprise Human Resources Integration.	2	1	1	1
Total, E-Gov	2	1	1	1
Agency Total.....	1,797	2,067	1,852	1,891

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table OC-3. Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Item	Amount
2019 Annualized Continuing Resolution.....	\$7,500,000
Change in Appropriation.....	-239,000
Budget Estimate, 2020.....	<u>7,261,000</u>

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

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

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, \$41,373,000, of which not to exceed \$4,850,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed \$800,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development; not to exceed \$1,448,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed \$1,672,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement; not to exceed \$22,251,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which \$21,376,000 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; not to exceed \$3,091,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed \$7,261,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: *Provided*, That funds made available by this Act to an agency in the Rural Development mission area for salaries and expenses shall be available to fund up to one administrative support staff for the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development: *Provided further*, That funds made available by this Act to the Departmental Administration area for salaries and expenses shall be available to fund up to one administrative support staff for the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Administration: *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 no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: *Provided further*, That not to exceed \$24,000 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 U.S.C. 551-558: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level.

PROJECT STATEMENT**Table OC-4. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))**

Item	2017		2018		2019		Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key	SY	2020	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Estimate	SY				Budget	SY
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Office of Communications	\$7,500	42	\$7,500	38	\$7,500	42	-\$239	(1)	-	\$7,261	42
Transfers Out:											
Working Capital Fund	-	-	-250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	7,500	42	7,250	38	7,500	42	-239	-	-	7,261	42
Lapsing Balances	-281	-	-303	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	7,219	42	6,947	38	7,500	42	-239	-	-	7,261	42

The numbered justifications items are keyed to the Change Key (Chg Key) column on the Project Statement.

Office of Communications

The base funds will continue to support the mission of the Office of Communications (OC) to provide leadership, expertise, counsel, and coordination for the development of communication strategies, which are vital to the overall formation, awareness, and acceptance of USDA programs and policies. OC serves as the principal USDA contact point for dissemination of consistent, timely information to the public. In addition to Departmental Administration funding used for human resources operational services, current year and budget year base funds may also be used to support expedited and enhanced classification, staffing and processing efforts.

- (1) A decrease of \$239,000 (\$7,500,000 and 42 staff years available in 2018).

The funding change is requested for the following item:

- A) A decrease of \$239,000 in non-personnel costs.

The proposed budget reduction will be absorbed by eliminating subscriptions and services that are used to distribute news and information to the public and reporters, including tools that support the USDA.gov website and social media channels. Travel to support the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and senior officials at public events will also be reduced as well as the replacement of aging and obsolete studio cameras, radio, and editing equipment; and eliminating supply purchases.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND STAFF YEARS**Table OC-5. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))**

State/Territory/Country	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Estimate	SY	Budget	SY
District of Columbia	7,219	42	6,852	37	7,404	41	7,164	41
Georgia	-	-	95	1	96	1	97	1
Obligations	7,219	42	6,947	38	7,500	42	7,261	42
Lapsing Balances	281	-	303	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	7,500	42	7,250	38	7,500	42	7,261	42

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table OC-6 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Estimate	2020 Budget
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C.....	\$4,407	\$4,171	\$4,844	\$4,898
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	-	95	96	97
11	Total personnel compensation	4,407	4,266	4,940	4,995
12	Personal benefits	1,300	1,287	1,322	1,355
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	-	36	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	5,707	5,589	6,262	6,350
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	83	153	100	90
22.0	Transportation of things	1	1	5	5
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	4	4	4	4
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	235	203	322	330
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	20	20	20	20
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	69	135	120	165
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	773	504	407	97
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	-	23	-	-
25.5	Research and development contracts	-	22	-	-
26.0	Supplies and materials	46	44	40	25
31.0	Equipment.....	281	249	220	175
	Total, Other Objects.....	1,512	1,358	1,238	911
99.9	Total, new obligations	7,219	6,947	7,500	7,261
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$35	\$35	\$36	\$36
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$151,375	\$156,000	\$160,000	\$160,000
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$89,607	\$112,000	\$113,680	\$115,385
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.0	13.5	13.6	13.6

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The mission of the Office of Communications (OC) is to provide leadership, expertise, management and coordination, to develop successful communication strategies and products that advance the mission of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and priorities of the government, while serving and engaging the public in a fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible manner. OC delivers information about USDA programs and policies to the American people. To fulfill that mission, OC disseminates information concerning USDA's programs, policies and activities through various media outlets and often directly to farmers, consumers, environmentalists, the business community, and other interest groups. The success of the Department's initiatives is directly supported by effective communication and public education campaigns, making it easier for the public to access information on the Department's programs. OC has also taken on an increasingly important role in coordinating USDA's communications during emergencies or other incidents that potentially affect large segments of the public or industry.

Current Activities

Branding, Events, Exhibits, and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD) and Printing Services

The branding component within BEEERD provides strategic planning and oversight for the use of the USDA brand across all media. Implementation of the "OneUSDA" brand has increased visibility for USDA's wide-ranging products and services. Brand management also ensures that the logo is used only where authorized, providing assurances to the public that the Department stands behind products and services that carry the USDA logo.

The Printing Services group was merged with BEEERD in January 2018 to provide greater efficiencies by bringing the editorial review and printing services in the same work group, uniting the publication process within the Department. The group remains the Department's central printing authority and liaison with the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing. The group consults with, advises, instructs, and assists the agency printing specialists, administrative officers, editors, publications writers, and information specialists on the most economical and effective printing methods and procedures. As audience preferences change, USDA is actively exploring expanding services into the digital realm.

The Constituent Affairs component within BEEERD manages briefings at USDA headquarters with major stakeholders, including national and international delegations. In 2018, this group reinstated a partnership with the Office of Congressional Relations' Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, creating efficiencies for the farm, trade, consumer associations, natural resources, and environmental groups seeking opportunities to engage with key USDA officials in Washington, D.C., and across the country.

Editorial Review (ER) provides Departmental oversight for USDA's publishing activities. Providing the final Departmental authorization and clearance of traditional and online publications before going out to the public, the group serves the Department's 8 mission areas and 36 agencies and staff offices and ensures compliance with Federal regulations and USDA Departmental Regulations and guidelines.

Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC)

CMBC is a central USDA resource for high-quality and cost-effective communications products and services. CMBC provides strategic communication planning solutions and tactical development, creation, production and distribution. CMBC creates and oversees a wide range of communication products, including video and audio, print, exhibits, and web. CMBC provides services to agencies for visitor centers, information campaigns, training, radio and TV public service announcements, webcasts, remote media interviews, and audio and video webinars.

CMBC supports a customer experience approach to the development of communication and training products and provides an essential service creating and disseminating communications for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Sub-Cabinet. CMBC promotes the integrated use of traditional media and social media outreach. CMBC has a role in the USDA's continuity of operations and emergency response communications plans. CMBC production services are provided to headquarters, regional, and local USDA offices, and to other government agencies, upon request.

CMBC's Creative business line is expanding capabilities to meet customer's needs and create efficiencies, including: flying drone video services with a certified operator; portable teleprompters to record messages outside a studio setting; and the addition of remote-controlled cameras to reduce crew size and client costs for events.

Digital Communications Division (DCD)

The DCD manages and maintains the USDA.gov web portal, ensuring content is available, accessible, and relevant to the Department's diverse stakeholders. DCD coordinates its digital communication efforts with the press office, providing expertise in web communications, online community engagement, and social media tactics. The group also supports agency and program area communications, evaluating web and social media analytics for USDA.gov and agency websites to better understand our users and their access of the Department's information and services.

Analytic trends are incorporated in ongoing communication planning efforts and web content strategies. The DCD team manages the USDA.gov search tool and seeks to optimize web content for search engines. The DCD team manages the Department's official social media assets such as the USDA Twitter, Facebook, Google, Instagram accounts, and the USDA Blog. DCD works collaboratively with agency web and communication teams, and chairs the Web Council within the Department, communicating best practices, Federal and USDA web initiatives, USDA web design and functionality guidance, and the use of emerging tools or technologies. Additionally, DCD works to ensure collaboration with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, public affairs directors, and program employees, to ensure our web communication and social media programs effectively support the Department's mission. The DCD develops and maintains current policy on the official use of social media, new media, and digital communications, and provides the standards and guidance to all USDA digital efforts.

Information Technology Management (ITM)

The ITM staff coordinates and administers the use of Information Technology (IT) within OC and is responsible for all IT activities in support of OC's operations, including: cyber security; network administration; application support; liaison with the Office of the Chief Information Officer units supporting OC; and oversight of contractors developing and maintaining applications for OC. The staff works cooperatively with other agencies and offices of the Department. It also works with other Departments at the Federal level such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Management and Budget.

The group also oversees an enterprise customer-relationship web application that provides the general public relevant answers to queries via the website. The group answers, via an online knowledgebase system, written, telephone, and in-person inquiries from the general public, Federal and State agencies, foreign embassies, and others. ITM staff also provides administrative support to OC management. Included in these services are facilities and property management, oversight of telecommunications services, and the processing of all training and travel requests.

Photography Services Division (PSD)

The PSD provides photography services including, but not limited to: photojournalism, editorial, portraiture, still life, multimedia productions, scientific, Forest Fire line documentation (Red Card certified photographer on staff), and photographic research for internal and external clients. PSD ensures that photographic assets are periodically transferred to the National Archives. PSD also provides content, digital and multimedia service to the DCD, integrating with social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Google, and Instagram. PSD verifies photographic quality and subject content, along with copyright and clearances for all images used in publications, ensuring images are supported by key words and metadata for USDA photography used externally, both print and web. The PSD also provides imagery for internal and external requestors via USDA's Flickr photo stream web site: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/>. The PSD provides photographic training for agency Public Affairs Specialists in documenting events, post production workflow and delivery. The PSD supports the Office of the Secretary with press and event photography, delivering both high quality prints and digital imagery (including multimedia products) as requested. PSD currently maintains the Department's comprehensive digital asset management archive collection using Flickr, an off the shelf commercial solution.

Press Operations (PO)

PO provides outreach to media outlets and responds to reporter's questions about the overall mission of the Department as well as the Secretary's priorities. Communication Coordinators provide the leadership, expertise, counsel and coordination needed to develop communications plans and implement strategies vital to the overall formulation and awareness of USDA programs and policies. In addition, PO coordinates public and media communications for the Office of the Secretary and assists USDA mission areas and staff offices in developing plans for effective crafting and dissemination of information.

Speechwriting

The Speechwriting section of OC compiles briefings and drafts speeches, Op-Eds, and other remarks for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, as well as provides message guidance to USDA staff.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

Branding Events Exhibits and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD)

The Office of Communications (OC) worked with the Office of the General Counsel and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) on the Cacao for Peace Initiative, developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for restricted use of the USDA Brand in Columbia. USDA hosted 20,000 visitors at the Department's booth during the 3-day 2018 USA Science Festival. At the same event, approximately 500 attendees participated in the USDA Woodsy Owl and the Agricultural Research Service entomologist Ron Ochoa stage events.

OC completed the consolidation of Printing Services group into BEEERD. USDA does not currently offer Electronic Publications (EPubs) in fixed or flowable formats, but OC established a GPO/USDA partnership to utilize existing GPO talent in creating EPubs and distribution channels for the EPubs.

The Departmental-level review and clearance process included significant publications such as: USDA Strategic Plan, FY 2018–2022 (Office of Budget and Program Analysis) - 44 pages; FY 2017 Annual Report on Technology Transfer (Research, Education, and Economics (REE)) - 434 pages; Semiannual Report to Congress, First Half, October 2017 – March 31, 2018 (Office of Inspector General) - 200 pages; Infant Nutrition and Feeding: A Guide for Use in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), (Food and Nutrition Service) - 627 pages; Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan Progress Report (Office of the Chief Scientist, REE) – 98 pages; and the USDA Cross Training Programs Quick Reference Tool for Customer-Facing Employees (Departmental Administration – Office of Human Resources Management) – 44 pages.

BEERD hosted 400 members of the National Farmers Union, as well as the annual National Association of Farm Broadcasting and National Young Rancher Winners.

Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC)

CMBC's Enterprise Web Application Platform and Services business line experienced rapid growth in FY 2018, increasing from nine agreements in FY 2017 and a total of \$676,000, to 29 agreements for \$3.5 million in FY 2018 (including non-USDA clients - NOAA and Open World Leadership Center). CMBC's Multimedia business line provided 22,456 teleconferences and produced 339 Webinars for agencies.

USDA Radio

CMBC's USDA Radio service produces daily news reports for radio broadcasters and consumers via the web. In FY 2018, CMBC produced 2,687 USDA radio stories-actualities. There were 572 Radio features, including 52 Agriculture USA, 260 Consumer Time features, and 260 Ag Update features. CMBC also provides technical support and coverage for news conferences with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other top government officials.

Digital Communications Division (DCD)

DCD continued to lead the Department-wide effort to redesign all agency and office websites to conform to the USDA web standards and guidelines through web modernization. DCD successfully integrated OC's Photography Division work into the Digital Communications Division to streamline and expand creative products on the web and social media; incorporated new data analysis and engagement strategies to increase

engagement across all USDA social media, email, and web platforms; developed and implemented new technical strategies for social media live-streaming, supporting all the Department’s major live events throughout the year; and continued strategic digital oversight of NewFarmers.gov, a site that provides a centralized collection of resources for new and beginning farmers and ranchers, with simple guidance on how to obtain grants/financing and other information needed to start farming or get back into farming.

Information Technology Management (ITM)

Our Information Technology Security Staff performed quarterly and annual Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) reporting activities for all our systems. Activities include documentation review as well as updating and testing approximately 150 controls on each system in the Cyber Security Assessment & Management tracking database.

ITM continued to manage *Ask the Expert*, a customer relations management system for USDA.gov, which provides self-service support for Web users by answering their questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service was asked 783,488 questions, and answered 767,818, for a self-service rate of 98 percent. In FY 2018, there were 22,032 questions submitted to *Ask the Expert*, which is almost double the amount of questions asked in FY 2017.

The Information Services staff responded to approximately 90,000 requests for information during FY 2018, to include: 7,720 telephone/hotline requests; 5,184 U.S. and foreign mail requests; 744 direct e-mail requests; 10 telephone and letter requests from Member of Congress; 5,376 inquiries from Ask the Expert; and 70,775 self-served information hotline requests.

Photography Services Division (PSD)

PSD had over 16.5 million hits on the Flickr site, completed 720 work requests in FY 2018 for photographic services, ranging from passports and portraits in the studio to local and field assignments documenting the Department and agency programs. In addition, PSD printed 1032 photos for Secretary requirements, agency exhibits and public displays, and reviewed and cleared 1,371 images for 105 publications.

Press Operations (PO)

The Press Operations arranged interviews with international, national and local media and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, to increase awareness and build support for USDA programs and priorities. This division also organized press for travel for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and worked with agencies to respond to press inquiries, craft communications plans, and drafted and edited press materials.

Speechwriting

OC’s Speechwriting group prepared speeches, briefings and remarks for use by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and subcabinet and researched and interviewed event planners to ensure that remarks matched up with audience expectations and were appropriate for each audience makeup in terms of topics of interest and including information specific to each audience. Topics of key speeches included, but were not limited to, Rural Development, trade, broadband, biofuels, agricultural commodities and markets outlook, forestry issues, future agriculture leaders, de-regulation, food safety, Veterans in Agriculture, young farmers, tax reform, the National School Lunch Program, OneUSDA transformation, and rural infrastructure. Key constituencies addressed included, but were not limited to, FFA, 4-H, local and state officials, farmers and ranchers, cooperative members and officials, USDA employees, transportation, technology and trade leaders, economists, educators, food service personnel, foresters, and more than 100 groups of citizens during the Back to Roots Tours.