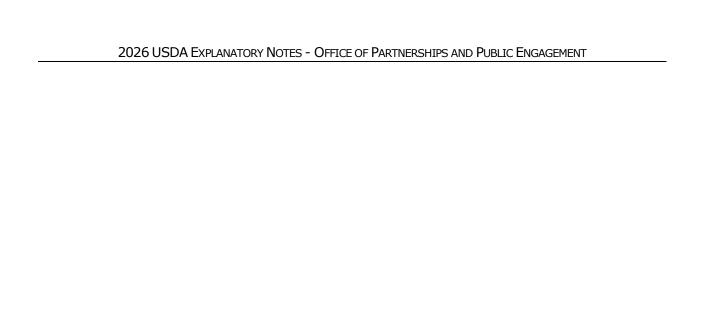
2026 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES - OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2026 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 2023 and 2024, Full-Year Continuing Resolution levels for 2025, and the President's Budget request for 2026. Amounts for 2025 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 2025, as extended by the American Relief Act, 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D). Amounts shown in 2025 and 2026 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 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) was established within the Department of Agriculture to enhance access to programs of the Department; to improve the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, limited resource producers, and veteran farmers and ranchers; and to promote youth outreach (7 U.S.C. 6934).

OPPE's responsibilities include ensuring that small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, veteran farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have access to programs and services of the Department by: establishing and monitoring the goals and objectives of the Department to increase participation in programs of the Department by small, beginning, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmers or ranchers; assessing the effectiveness of Department outreach programs; developing and implementing a plan to coordinate outreach activities and services provided by the Department; providing input to the agencies and offices on programmatic and policy decisions; measuring outcomes of the programs and activities of the Department on small farms and ranches, beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran farmers or ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers programs; recommending new initiatives and programs to the Secretary of Agriculture; and performing any other related duties the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

OPPE is located at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2024, OPPE's staff was comprised of 49 full-time permanent employees, including 14 employees located in Washington, D.C. and 35 employees located across the United States.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES

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

	2023		2024		2025		2026	
Item	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Office of Partnerships and Public								
Engagement	\$7,780	10	\$7,500	14	\$7,500	14	\$3,000	3
Lapsing Balances	-192	-	-100	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	7,588	10	7,400	14	7,500	14	3,000	3
Other Funding:								
Agency Partnership Outreach	7,500	26	7,000	30	7,500	35	7,500	18
Total Appropriation, Other Funding.	7,500	26	7,000	30	7,500	35	7,500	18
Lapsing Balances (enter with minus)	-603	-	-161	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations, Other funding	6,897	26	6,839	30	7,500	35	7,500	18
Total Obligations, OPPE	14,485	36	14,239	44	15,000	49	10,500	21
Total Available, OPPE	15,280	36	14,500	44	15,000	49	10,500	21

^{*} This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES

Table OPPE-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

			2023 Actual			2024 Actual			2025 Estimated			2026 Estimated
Item	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total
SES	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1
GS-15	3	-	3	6	-	6	6	-	6	1	-	1
GS-14	3	4	7	3	4	7	3	4	7	-	-	-
GS-13	6	25	31	6	25	31	6	25	31	-	1	1
GS-12	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	-	-	-
Total Permanent.	14	32	46	17	32	49	17	32	49	2	1	3
Total Perm. FT EOY	14	32	46	17	32	49	17	32	49	2	1	3
FTE*	14	25	39	19	30	47	17	32	49	2	1	3

^{*} This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table OPPE-3. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

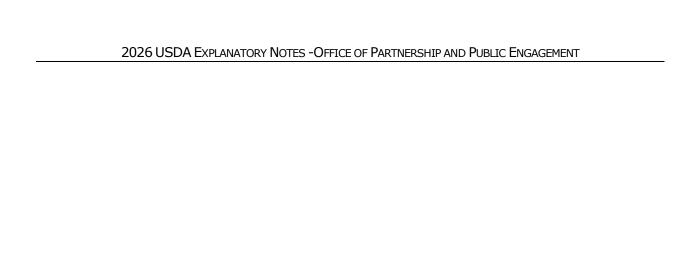
	2023	2024	2025	2026
Item	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA Contact Center	\$4	\$13	\$12	\$12
General Counsel Legal Compliance	-	-	1	9
Material Management Service	7	7	3	3
Mail and Reproduction Services	12	17	14	14
Integrated Procurement Systems	3	4	4	4
Personnel and Document Security Program	-	1	3	3
Procurement Operations Services	5	8	10	10
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	1	1	3	4
Subtotal	32	51	50	59
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	12	6	8	12
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center	12	17	11	12
Financial Management Systems	139	297	149	152
Internal Control Support Services	-	13	11	11
Financial Management Support Services	377	417	445	449
Subtotal	528	744	616	624
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	223	213	227	248
Department Administration Information Technology Office	1,043	873	107	108
Digital Infrastructure Services Center	27	614	271	38
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	14	21	23	23
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services	2	2	2	2
Enterprise Network Services	27	23	28	29
Subtotal	1,336	1,746	658	448
Correspondence Management Services	, -	, -	-	-
Office of the Executive Secretariat	26	28	18	15

2026 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES -OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Item	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated
Total, Working Capital Fund	1,934	2,575	1,350	1,158
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	3	6	5	5
Agency Partnership Outreach	1	1	1	1
Employee Experience	-	1	-	=
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network	-	1	=	-
Medical Services	2	5	5	5
NCR Interpreting Services	1	2	2	2
Physical Security	-	1	1	1
Security Detail	-	1	1	1
Security Operations Program	1	1	1	1
Talent Group	-	1	=	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	8	20	16	16
E-Gov:				
E-Rulemaking	2	-	-	-
Grants.gov	5	5	6	7
Total, E-Gov	7	5	6	7
Agency Total	1,949	2,600	1,372	1,181

^{*}This table is based on a preliminary 2026 estimate, which will be adjusted later to reflect the Department's updated posture and footprint.

^{**}In alignment with the current Administration's priorities, the 2025 amounts reflect expenses incurred prior to January 20, 2025.



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ACCOUNT 1: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored):

Office of the Secretary (Including Transfers of Funds)

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, \$42,696,000 of which not to exceed \$6,000,000 shall be available for the immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed \$1,896,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed \$5,000,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations; not to exceed \$3,000,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, of which \$1,500,000 shall be for 7 U.S.C. 2279(c)(5); not to exceed \$18,300,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which \$17,000,000 shall be available for Departmental Administration to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department: *Provided*, That funds made available by this Act to an agency in the Administration mission area for salaries and expenses are available to fund up to one administrative support staff for the Office; not to exceed \$3,500,000 shall be available for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed \$5,000,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: Provided further, That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to transfer funds appropriated for any office of the Office of the Secretary to any other office of the Office of the Secretary: Provided further, That no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: Provided further, That not to exceed \$22,000 of the amount made available under this paragraph for the immediate Office of the Secretary shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary: Provided further, That the amount made available under this heading for Departmental Administration shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by 5 U.S.C. 551-558: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs shall be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level: Provided further, That no funds made available under this heading for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

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

Item	Amount
Enacted, 2025	\$7,500,000
Change in Appropriation	-4,500,000
Budget Estimate, 2026	

PROJECT STATEMENTS

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

									FTE Inc.
	2023		2024		2025		2026	Inc. or	or Chg
Item	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs Dec.	Dec. Key
Discretionary Appropriations:									
Office of Partnerships and								-	
Public Engagement	\$5,773	10	\$6,000	14	\$6,000	14	\$1,500	3 \$4,500	11 (1)
SDFR Policy Research Center.	2,007	-	1,500	-	1,500	-	1,500		-
Subtotal	7,780	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3 -4,500	11
Total Adjusted Approp	7,780	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3 -4,500	11
Add back:									
Transfers In and Out,									
Rescissions	1,500	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
Total Appropriation	9,280	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3 -4,500	11
Transfers Out:	•		-		-			•	
Working Capital Funds	-1,500	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
Total Transfers Out	-1,500	-	-	-	-	-	_		-
Total Available	7,780	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3 -4,500	-11
Lapsing Balances	-192	-	· -	-	· -	-	, -		-
Bal. Available, EOY	-	-	-	-	-	-			-
Total Obligations	7,588		7,400	14	7,500	-	3,000	4,500	-11

^{*} This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

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

									_	FTE Inc.
	2023		2024		2025		2026		Inc. or	or
Item	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Dec.	Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Partnerships and Public										
Engagement	\$5,581	10	\$5,900	14	\$6,000	14	\$1,500	3	-\$4,500	-11
SDFR Policy Research Center	2,007	-	1,500	-	1,500	-	1,500	-	-	
Subtotal Disc Obligations	7,588	10	7,400	14	7,500	14	3,000	3	-4,500	-11
Total Obligations	7,588	10	7,400	14	7,500	14	3,000	3	-4,500	-11
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances	192	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Available	7,780	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3	-4,500	-11
Less:										
Total Transfers Out	1,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Appropriation	9,280	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3	-4,500	-11

^{*} This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

Base funds will allow OPPE to continue to ensure small farms and ranches, beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers have access to programs and services of the Department.

The numbers and letters of the following listing relates to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

(1) A decrease of \$4,500,000 and 11 FTEs (\$7,500,000 and 14 FTEs available in 2025).

In pursuit of streamlining workforce efforts, facilities and other government efficiencies, the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement has reduced staff from 14 FTEs in 2025 to 3 FTEs in 2026. At this funding level, OPPE will ensure small farms and ranchers, beginning farmers and ranchers, and veteran farmers and ranchers have access to key programs and services of the Department.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTES

Table OPPE-7. Geographic Breakdown of Discretionary Obligations and FTEs for OPPE (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

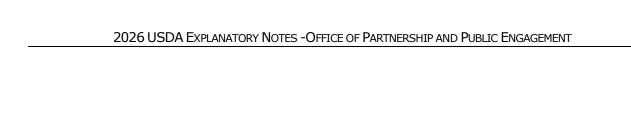
	2023		2024		2025		2026	
State/Territory/Country	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
District of Columbia	\$7,558	10	\$7079	11	\$7,085	11	\$2,849	2
Georgia	-	-	57	1	151	1	151	1
Kentucky	-	-	60	1	60	1	-	-
Arizona	-	-	204	1	204	1	-	
Obligations	7,558	10	7,400	14	7,500	14	3,000	3
Lapsing Balances	192	-	100	-	-	-	-	
Total, Available	7,780	10	7,500	14	7,500	14	3,000	3

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table OPPE-8. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

		2023	2024	2025	2026
Item No.	Item	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C	\$1,731	\$1,593	\$1,965	\$381
	Personnel Compensation, Field	991	322	415	151
11	Total personnel compensation	2,722	1,915	2,399	549
12	Personal benefits	646	704	649	149
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	-	-	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	3,368	2,619	3,048	698
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	245	178	178	-
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	1	1	1	1
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	73	46	46	46
24.0	Printing and reproduction	3	12	12	9
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	195	676	676	-
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	2112	2,289	1,979	763
26.0	Supplies and materials	46	52	52	-
31.0	Equipment	45	27	27	-
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	1,509	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Total, Other Objects	4,220	4,781	4,471	2,319
99.9	Total, new obligations	7,588	7,400	7,500	3,000
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)	\$3	\$4	\$4	\$4
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$174,923	\$204,010	\$223,870	\$223,870
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$127,305	\$112,183	\$126,855	\$153,899
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.9	13.1	13.2	13.9

^{*} This table assumes a reduced 2026 FTE baseline due to 2025 voluntary staff separations and administrative cost efficiencies.



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STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) is the bridge between USDA and the people it serves. OPPE provides outreach, technical assistance, and education to communities nationwide, particularly rural areas. Key responsibilities include:

- Assisting socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers.
- Coordinating agricultural youth programs.
- Connecting veterans with agricultural training and rehabilitation programs.
- Strategic outreach initiatives with federal partners to engage external stakeholders.
- Any additional programs and initiatives deemed essential to advancing USDA's mission.

By fostering collaboration within USDA and building strong partnerships outside the Department, OPPE helps to highlight the work of all USDA mission areas and staff offices to secure a brighter future for American agriculture.

Current Activities

The OPPE mission is to develop and maintain partnerships focused on solutions to challenges facing rural communities, and to connect those communities to the education, tools, and resources available to them through USDA's programs and initiatives.

OPPE reviews USDA's outreach processes to effectively coordinate interactions with the public and USDA's support of partner events at the national, regional, and local levels.

OPPE supports USDA's recruitment processes and coordinates USDA's fellowships, scholarships, and internships.

OPPE works with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, U.S. Small Business Administration, Department of Labor and other government and nongovernmental partners on additional opportunities to collaborate and strengthen service delivery to rural and underserved communities.

OPPE responds to Departmental requests for data coordination across various USDA and White House initiatives as needed by the Secretary.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

USDA/1890 Liaison Officer Program:

OPPE provides oversight of the 1890 Land-Grant Institution National Program, which partners with the 19 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities established under the second Morill Land-Grant Act of 1890. This program has three components: the USDA liaisons program, which places a USDA liaison at each of the 1890 Land-Grant Universities; the USDA 1890 Task Force (Task Force), which aims to enhance collaboration between USDA agencies and the 1890 Land-Grant Universities; and the 1890 National Scholars Program, which bestows scholarship recipients with comprehensive support, covering full tuition, fees, books, and room and board for up to 4 years. The scholars, enrolled at one of the 1890 Land-Grant Universities, pursue degrees needed by USDA such as agriculture, food science, natural resource sciences, or related disciplines.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- OPPE successfully recruited students that led to 94 new executed scholarship agreements
 valued at approximately \$1 million. These agreements were designed to provide full tuition
 support, summer internships, and pathways to USDA careers, directly addressing HBCUs'
 needs for enhancing student retention, experiential learning opportunities, and seamless
 transitions to professional employment.
- 3 years of steady growth in the program after historically low participation, with 2 consecutive years of more than 90 scholars participating.
- More than 275 events led by the USDA liaisons during the last 2 quarters of 2024, ensuring strong participation in USDA programs among 1890 Land-Grant Universities, students, and faculty.

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program ("2501 Program"):

OPPE continued implementation of the Farm Bill provisions for the 2501 Program, including the application of new reporting and performance tools to better capture programmatic outcomes.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- OPPE provided 31 grants for new 2501 Program projects to support historically underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers. Project funding totaled \$22.6 million for projects in 24 states and territories.
- 19 of the 31 grantees specifically include serving veteran farmers or ranchers.
- OPPE held a joint in-person meeting with Project Directors from 2501 Program grantees and grantees from NIFA's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) to provide grantees the updated programmatic and funding opportunity information and collect stakeholder feedback for future programmatic enhancements to improve delivery of the 2501 Program. Senior leaders from across USDA's staff offices, mission areas, and agencies attended and presented during the event to over 300 attendees.
- OPPE is reducing the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse in the 2501 Program through the implementation of new performance measures as well as a 2025 project to update the monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures for these grants.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center:

In 2024, OPPE was required in the 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act to provide \$1.5 million in grant funding to continue research on policies affecting historically underserved farmers and ranchers with the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFR) Policy Research Center (Policy Center) at Alcorn State University in Lorman, MS.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- The Policy Center works with the 18 other 1890 Land-Grant Universities to make policy recommendations for legislation to improve the success of SDFRs.
- The Policy Center has four main areas of focus in carrying out its mission: 1) analyzing current agriculture policy and its implications of SDFRs, 2) improving their participation in USDA programs and services, 3) helping SDFRs to stay in farming and preserving their lands, and 4) expanding SDFRs' technology adoption.

Advisory Committees:

The Designated Federal Official in OPPE manages and supports two Federal Advisory Committees that serve USDA by making recommendations to improve program design and delivery, eliminate barriers to participation, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- Hosted a public meeting for the 15 new appointees to the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers (ACMF) in July 2024, to familiarize these new members with USDA subject matter experts advising on USDA programs, agency updates on recommendations currently under consideration, and explore new issues that may form the basis of recommendations to be tendered this term; and
- Successfully built on the 2023 rechartering for the Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (ACBFR), which had been inactive since October 2019, with formal appointment by the Secretary of 20 new members in August 2024. Those members are currently serving 2-years terms and scheduled to meet in 2025.

Agricultural Youth Coordinator:

Per the requirements of section 12305 of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE hired a Youth Coordinator in July 2023, dedicated to meeting with youth across the United States to promote agricultural education and

raise awareness of opportunities in agriculture. The Youth Coordinator builds awareness of the reach and importance of agriculture across multiple disciplines in pre-K to 12 populations and advocates on behalf of youth involved in food and agriculture organizations in their interactions with USDA employees.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- Coordinated a cooperative agreement with Thurgood Marshall College Fund to host interns across the department for the summer of 2025;
- Initiated a new MOU with the National Future Farmers of America (FFA), an organization with more than 1 million members and 9,000 local chapters, to build awareness of the reach and importance of agriculture across multiple fields and disciplines, communicate available USDA internship opportunities to the National FFA Organization members and alumni, and connect rural communities to USDA programs and initiatives; and
- Formed new partnerships with American Future of Agriculture and International Foreign Youth
 Exchange to strengthen the future competitiveness and sustainability of the U.S. agriculture
 industry by preparing more young people for careers in agriculture.

These MOUs expand USDA's reach to an additional 8,000 students from 200 colleges and universities to foster leadership development, explore opportunities for providing expertise in consulting, planning, and technical assistance, and ensure broad participation in USDA programs to further agriculture research, extension, teaching programs and library and information services.

Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (MVAL):

OPPE collaborates with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Small Business Administration, and other interagency partners, to support approximately 250,000 transitioning service members annually.

Select 2024 program highlights include:

- Conducted outreach to Active Duty and Transitioning Service Members, Veterans, Military Spouses and Dependents through in-person and virtual trainings that reached over 3,500 participants from U.S. military installations across the globe;
- Connected over 290 transitioning service members and veterans seeking employment opportunities at USDA;
- Refined and established a baseline for web performance measures on USDA's Veterans website. In 2024, the USDA veteran site visits included over 116,900 views from 67,800 active users; and
- Provided approximately 500 one-on-one consultations to veteran demographic stakeholders interested in pursuing agriculture support or employment with USDA.