

2016 Explanatory Notes
Office of the Secretary
Office of Communications

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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 possible 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. The activities of OC have expanded as new technology has become available and as additional segments of the public have become constituents. The basic purpose of the office, however, remains constant: to provide leadership, expertise, management, and coordination to develop successful communication strategies and products that advance the mission of USDA and priorities of the Administration, while serving and engaging the public in a fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible manner.

The mission of OC is to provide leadership, expertise, counsel, and coordination for the development of communication strategies, which are vital to the overall formation and awareness of USDA programs and policies. OC serves as the principal USDA contact point for dissemination of consistent, timely information to the public.

OC is located in Washington, D. C. As of September 30, 2014, there were 65 full-time permanent employees.

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

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Available Funds and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Item	2013 Actual		2014 Actual		2015 Enacted		2016 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$9,006	53	\$8,065	55	\$7,750	53	\$8,228	57
Rescission.....	-244	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration.....	-402	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Appropriation.....	8,360	53	8,065	55	7,750	53	8,228	57
Transfers Out.....	-	-	-75	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	8,360	53	7,990	55	7,750	53	8,228	57
Lapsing Balances.....	-67	-	-72	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations.....	8,293	53	7,918	55	7,750	53	8,228	57
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:								
Agency Photo Services.....	35	-	34	-	34	-	34	-
Employee Details.....	-	-	35	-	34	-	-	-
Working Capital Fund (WCF) <u>a/</u>	4,695	23	4,018	19	5,532	25	5,489	26
Total, Other USDA.....	4,730	23	4,087	19	5,600	25	5,523	26
Total, OC.....	13,023	76	12,005	74	13,350	78	13,751	83

a/ This section only includes WCF activities managed by OC. Please refer to WCF President's Budget for more details about the WCF.

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2013 Actual		2014 Actual		2015 Enacted		2016 Estimate	
	Wash.	Wash.	Wash.	Wash.	Wash.	Wash.	Wash.	
	D.C.	D.C.	D.C.	D.C.	D.C.	D.C.	D.C.	
SES.....	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
GS-15.....	11	11	11	11	9	9	10	
GS-14.....	12	13	13	13	9	9	10	
GS-13.....	9	10	10	10	8	8	9	
GS-12.....	18	14	14	14	10	10	11	
GS-11.....	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	
GS-9.....	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	
GS-7.....	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	
GS-4.....	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Ungraded Positions.....	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Perm.								
Positions.....	68	65	65	65	53	53	57	
Unfilled, EOY.....	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total, Perm. Full-Time								
Employment EOY.....	65	65	65	65	53	53	57	
Staff Year Est.....	59	55	55	55	53	53	57	

Note: Positions shown are appropriated only. For WCF financed positions, refer to WCF President's

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Budget for more details.

The estimates include appropriation language for this item as follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

Salaries and Expenses:

Office of the Secretary

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$45,805,000~~] \$47,308,000, of which not exceed [~~\$5,051,000~~] \$5,137,000 shall be available for the [immediate] Immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed [~~\$502,000~~] \$507,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations; ~~not to exceed \$250,000 shall be available for the Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison~~; not to exceed [~~\$1,496,000~~] \$1,520,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination; not to exceed [~~\$1,209,000~~] \$1,228,000 shall be available for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach; not to exceed [~~\$25,928,000~~] \$26,504,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$25,124,000~~] \$25,688,000 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 [~~\$3,869,000~~] \$3,934,000 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 [~~\$7,750,000~~] \$8,228,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: *Provided*, 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 \$11,000 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 may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level [*Provided further*, That no funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency].

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The first change in language is for the purpose of deleting restrictive language in the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, that requires Congressional notification prior to funds being obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment.

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Budget Estimate, 2016.....	\$8,228,000
2015 Enacted.....	<u>7,750,000</u>
Change in Appropriation.....	<u>+478,000</u>

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Summary of Increases and Decreases
(Dollars in thousands)

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2016</u>
	Actual	Change	Change	Change	Estimate
Discretionary Appropriations:					
Office of Communications.....	\$8,360	-\$295	-\$315	+\$478	\$8,228

Project Statement
Adjusted Appropriations Detail and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	<u>2013 Actual</u>		<u>2014 Actual</u>		<u>2015 Enacted</u>		<u>Inc. or Dec.</u>		<u>2016 Estimate</u>	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Office of Communications.....	\$8,360	53	\$8,065	55	\$7,750	53	+\$478 (1)	+4	\$8,228	57
Rescissions, Transfers, and Seq. (Net)....	646	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Appropriation.....	9,006	53	8,065	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57
Transfers Out:										
WCF.....	-	-	-75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescission.....	-244	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration.....	-402	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	8,360	53	7,990	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57
Lapsing Balances.....	-67	-	-72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	8,293	53	7,918	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57

Project Statement
Obligations Detail and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	<u>2013 Actual</u>		<u>2014 Actual</u>		<u>2015 Enacted</u>		<u>Inc. or Dec.</u>		<u>2016 Estimate</u>	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Communications.....	\$8,293	53	\$7,918	55	\$7,750	53	+\$478 (1)	+4	\$8,228	57
Total Obligations.....	8,293	53	7,918	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57
Lapsing Balances.....	67	-	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	8,360	53	7,990	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57
Transfers Out to WCF.....	-	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescission.....	244	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration.....	402	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	9,006	53	8,065	55	7,750	53	+478	+4	8,228	57

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Justification of Increases and Decreases

- (1) An increase of \$478,000 and 4 staff years for the Office of Communications (\$7,775,000 and 53 staff years available in 2015).

The base funds will continue to support the mission of OC, which is 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 the activities and functions specifically described in the budget request, current year and budget year base funds will be used to carry out activities and functions consistent with the full range of authorities and activities delegated to the office. In addition to Departmental Administration funding used for human resources operational services, current year and budget year base funds will also be used to support expedited and enhanced classification, staffing and processing efforts.

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- a. An increase of \$88,000 for pay costs (\$18,000 for annualization of the fiscal year 2015 pay raise and \$70,000 for the anticipated fiscal year 2016 pay raise).

This increase is needed to maintain the current level of staffing to ensure OC provides leadership, expertise, counsel, and coordination for the development of communications strategies, which are vital to the overall formation, awareness and acceptance of USDA programs and policies.

- b. An increase of \$390,000 and 4 staff years to backfill retirement vacancies.

This increase is needed to backfill critical vacancies that will occur as current onboard personnel retire, as identified during succession planning. Filling these vacancies will enable OC to operate efficiently and effectively through leadership, expertise, management, and coordination to develop successful communication strategies and products that advance the mission of USDA and the priorities of the Administration.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
(Dollars in thousands and Staff Years (SYs))

State/Territory	2013 Actual		2014 Actual		2015 Enacted		2016 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
District of Columbia.....	\$8,293	53	\$7,918	55	\$7,750	53	\$8,228	57
Lapsing Balances.....	67	-	72	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	8,360	53	7,990	55	7,750	53	8,228	57

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Classification by Objects
(Dollars in thousands)

	<u>2013 Actual</u>	<u>2014 Actual</u>	<u>2015 Enacted</u>	<u>2016 Estimate</u>
Personnel Compensation:				
Washington D.C.....	\$5,309	\$5,492	\$5,327	\$5,648
11 Total personnel compensation.....	5,309	5,492	5,327	5,648
12 Personnel benefits.....	1,481	1,494	1,443	1,533
13.0 Benefits for former personnel.....	6	6	-	-
Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	6,796	6,992	6,770	7,181
Other Objects:				
21.0 Travel and transportation of persons.....	111	52	75	75
22.0 Transportation of things.....	7	4	7	7
23.2 Rental payments to others.....	11	-	-	-
23.3 Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	253	338	338	338
24.0 Printing and reproduction.....	28	33	33	43
25.2 Other services from non-Federal sources.....	357	82	107	107
25.3 Other purchases of goods and services from Federal sources.....	587	369	369	406
26.0 Supplies and materials.....	83	41	41	41
31.0 Equipment.....	60	7	10	30
Total, Other Objects.....	1,497	926	980	1,047
99.9 Total, new obligations.....	8,293	7,918	7,750	8,228
Position Data:				
Average Salary (dollars), SES Position.....	\$163,970	\$165,875	\$168,000	\$170,000
Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$89,033	\$100,168	\$102,000	\$103,000
Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.1	13.5	13.5	13.5

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Shared Funding Projects
(Dollars in thousands)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Enacted</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
Working Capital Fund:				
Administration:				
Beltsville Service Center.....	\$23	\$20	\$29	\$29
Mail and Reproduction Management.....	96	76	85	86
Procurement Operations.....	27	27	6	11
Integrated Procurement System.....	8	8	8	8
Subtotal.....	<u>154</u>	<u>131</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>134</u>
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	202	102	149	161
Finance and Management:				
NFC/USDA.....	18	19	20	20
Financial Systems.....	19	19	19	23
Internal Control Support Services.....	56	38	32	33
Subtotal.....	<u>93</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>76</u>
Information Technology:				
NITC/USDA.....	637	533	1,025	1,027
Telecommunications Services.....	276	214	571	577
Subtotal.....	<u>913</u>	<u>747</u>	<u>1,596</u>	<u>1,604</u>
Correspondence Management.....	3	3	2	2
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	<u>1,365</u>	<u>1,059</u>	<u>1,946</u>	<u>1,977</u>
Departmental Shared Cost Programs:				
1890's USDA Initiatives.....	2	2	3	3
Classified National Security Information.....	-	-	1	1
Continuity of Operations Planning.....	2	2	2	2
E-GOV Initiatives HSPD-12.....	5	5	6	6
Emergency Operations Center.....	2	2	2	2
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program.....	2	2	2	2
Human Resources Transformation (inc. Diversity Council).....	1	1	2	2
Medical Services.....	3	3	8	9
Personnel and Document Security.....	4	4	3	3
Pre-authorizing Funding.....	3	3	3	3
Retirement Processor / Web Application.....	-	-	1	1
Sign Language Interpreter Services.....	8	4	-	-
TARGET Center.....	1	1	1	1
USDA 1994 Program.....	1	1	1	1
Virtual University.....	2	1	2	2
Visitor Information Center.....	1	-	-	-
Total, Departmental Shared Cost Programs.....	<u>37</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>38</u>
E-Gov:				
Enterprise Human Resources Integration.....	2	2	2	2
E-Training.....	2	2	2	2
Integrated Acquisition Environment - Loans and Grants.....	1	2	2	2
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	1	1	1	1
Total, E-Gov.....	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
Agency Total.....	<u>1,408</u>	<u>1,097</u>	<u>1,990</u>	<u>2,022</u>

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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 aided by the effectiveness of communication, and public education campaigns, and the ease of public access to 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:

Press Operations (PO): PO is responsible for outreach to media outlets and responds to questions from reporters as they relate to 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 communication 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, and also provides message guidance to USDA staff.

Creative Media & Broadcast Center (CMBC): The CMBC is a central resource for high-quality and cost-effective communications products and services. CMBC is an integral part of the OC Strategic Communications Planning Team, providing creative communication strategies and solutions for the USDA Secretary and the agencies. The CMBC is responsible for the creation and oversight of a wide range of communication products, including illustrations, posters, brochures, banners, trade-show exhibits, visitor centers, information campaigns, informational videos, radio and TV public service announcements, web cast, satellite media interviews, and audio and video conferences. Users can reduce travel costs through video teleconferencing while still providing mission outreach and training between headquarters and field offices, program participants, and the public.

The CMBC creates daily and weekly radio and TV feature packages for broadcast and cable outlets, including a weekly radio feature service covering five consumer and five agricultural topics and a five minute radio feature which are all available online. Stories are also posted on USDA's web site as well as on the USDA YouTube channel. The CMBC creates a variety of multimedia products, utilizing new technologies, such as audio and video web streaming of Secretarial events (live and archived) via the Internet. The CMBC's combined capabilities, technology, and collaboration supports the Secretary's goal of a coordinated and centralized approach to the development of communication and training products and provides an essential service in the immediate dissemination of communications for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Sub-Cabinet. The CMBC promotes the integrated use of traditional media in social media outreach. The CMBC has a role in the USDA's continuity of operations and emergency response communications plans. Services are provided to international, national, regional, State, and local USDA offices, as well as to other government agencies, upon request.

USDA radio provides technical support and covers the radio news conferences with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other top government officials.

Web Communications Division (WCD): The WCD manages and maintains the USDA.gov web portal and ensures content is available, accessible, and relevant to the Department's diverse stakeholders. WCD contributes to digital communication efforts in coordination with the press office, providing expertise in web communications, online

community engagement, and social media tactics. Web and social media analytics are evaluated 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 WCD team manages the USDA.gov search tool and seeks to optimize web content for search engines. The WCD team manages the Department's official social media assets such as the USDA Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Instagram accounts, and the USDA Blog. WCD works collaboratively with agency web and communication teams, and chairs the webmaster community within the Department, communicating best practices, Federal and USDA web initiatives, USDA web design and functionality, and the use of emerging tools or technologies. Additionally, WCD works collaboratively with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, public affairs directors, and program employees to ensure our web communication program effectively supports the Department's mission. The WCD 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 within OC and is responsible for all IT activities in support of OC's operations, to include: 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 centers and divisions. 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. Our Information Response team emphasizes maintaining effective relationships with the general public. This group answers via an online knowledgebase system, written, telephone, and in-person inquiries from Federal and State agencies, Members of Congress, non-governmental institutions, foreign embassies, and the general public. 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.

Branding Events Exhibits and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD): The branding component within BEEERD provides strategic planning and oversight for the use of the USDA brand across all media. Implementation of the "One USDA" brand has increased visibility for USDA's wide-ranging products and services. Brand management also ensures that the logo is used only where authorized and provides assurances to the public that the Department stands behind products and services that carry the USDA logo. BEEERD's events/exhibit team coordinates outreach efforts across USDA to ensure maximum exposure using the most cost-effective means. This collaborative approach prevents duplication of effort and reduces costs Department-wide. The Constituent Affairs component within BEEERD manages briefings at USDA headquarters with major stakeholders, including numerous national and international delegations. They work to provide farm, trade, consumer associations, and natural resources and environmental groups with opportunities to hear from key USDA officials in Washington D.C. and across the country. Editorial Review (ER) provides Departmental oversight for USDA's publishing activities. ER reviews manuscripts and authorizes final clearance for traditional and online publications from the Department's 15 agencies and 7 mission areas. The Division ensures compliance with Federal regulations and USDA guidelines.

Photography Services Division (PSD): The PSD provides various types of photography, including, but not limited to: photojournalism, editorial, portraiture, still life photography, multimedia productions, scientific and food photography, and photographic research for internal and external clients. PSD verifies photographic quality and subject content along with copyright and clearances for all USDA photography used externally, both print and web. The PSD also provides imagery for internal and external requestors via USDA's Flickr 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, a commercial off the shelf solution. PSD also continues to spearhead the Department's initiative for a Digital Asset Management solution using industry standard technologies to migrate disparate, ad-hoc systems into one enterprise-wide system that is funded collectively by agencies within the Department.

Printing Division (PD): PD has central printing authority and, therefore, is USDA's liaison with the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing (JCP). PD 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.

PD reviews publications submitted by the Department for conformity with printing, policy, and regulations of the Department, JCP, and Office of Management and Budget. PD writes all specifications for printing and binding of administrative printing procured through the GPO and commercial firms, including booklets, pamphlets, forms, posters, flyers, and specialty items, such as magnets, fans, and over 50 specialty products. Our main focus is to provide the Department with guidance on all GPO matters, in accordance with Title 44, JCP Printing and Binding Regulations.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

Press Operations (PO): Highlights include:

- Arranged interviews for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary;
- Organized press for travel for Secretary and Deputy Secretary; and
- Worked with agencies to respond to press inquiries and drafted and edited press materials.

Speechwriting: Highlights include:

- Prepared speeches and briefings for use by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary;
- Wrote weekly radio messages and columns for the Secretary, along with additional columns as appropriate for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Subcabinet; and
- Provided talking points and assisted members of the Subcabinet, Agency Heads, and their staff in preparing speeches.

Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC): Highlights include:

- Produced video public service announcement promoting international conservation and sustainable forest management;
- Recruitment and information outreach video for Forest Service;
- Employee security video;
- Highlighting School Lunch programs that have successfully adopted new nutrition guidelines;
- New Forest Service Visitor Center in the Yates Building, Washington DC;
- Interpretive signage at The National Arboretum;
- CMBC produced 35 diversity employee broadcasts;
- A total of 850 Webinars were coordinated for USDA agencies during 2014; and
- Provided services creating webcast modules for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Provided 18,456 audio conferences.

USDA Radio: Highlights include:

- Our three USDA Radio producers continue to cover a diverse range of topics for the Office of the Secretary and USDA agencies, as well as providing the technical support and a moderator for radio news conferences in our studio with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other top government officials. In 2014, USDA radio hosted 35 media news conferences. The reporter/producers created 2,219 news stories; aired 561 radio features, including 51 five-minute documentaries, 249 Consumer Time Features, and 249 Ag Update Features;
- There were 90,763 hits to the radio news website, 27,661 hits to the radio web feature site, 317,710 hits to the radio newswire podcast sources, and 271,373 hits to the radio features podcast sources; and
- There were 734 calls to the radio story phone line service in 2014.

Web Communications Division (WCD): Highlights include:

- Led the Department-wide effort to redesign all Agency and Office websites to conform to the USDA Web Standards and Guidelines, successfully launching 5 major Agency web sites in 2014;

- Kicked-off development of an Enterprise-level Open Source Content Management System that will lower costs by eliminating the current separate content management and development platforms;
- Successfully managed the creation and optimization of the USDA Farm Bill web site, allowing decision makers and leaders to gauge the effectiveness of USDA's implementation;
- Successfully launched USDA's New Farmers web site that provides a centralized collection of resources for new and beginning farmers and ranchers that consistently ranks in the top 3 most viewed pages for all of USDA;
- Began work on the first Disaster Clearinghouse mandated by the White House to house disaster resources based on a matrix developed by USDA that will eventually become a Federal-wide tool. Moved project from an undeveloped web-based application to USDA's Ask-The-Expert system;
- Successfully led the curation and development of a USDA glossary, housing key terms commonly used in USDA that may have been unfamiliar to external users;
- Led the Department's Digital Strategy effort, successfully meeting OMB's deadlines for delivering 21st century services and systems to customers;
- Led the ongoing USA Search effort, a free open-source tool provided by GSA, resulting in a cost savings to USDA.gov and several agency web programs;
- Led efforts to streamline content publishing and management leading to more immediate digital publishing and more timely access for important information;
- Led the USDA Digital Analytics Program (DAP), implementing regular reporting and analytics assessments that include recommendations to improve outreach and content delivery across the USDA mission and opened the DAP to all USDA agencies and provided access to other Federal agency DAP metrics;
- Successfully conducted multiple Google Hangouts to utilize a free product to engage with the public in a way USDA has never done before, putting faces to the names the general public rarely sees;
- Convened a monthly Social Media Roundtable, which meets at least monthly, to discuss best practices and develop coordinated strategic communication plans; and
- Contributed to social and web strategy development, execution and evaluation for programs or campaigns including StrikeForce, Farm Bill, Farm to School, Healthier Next Generation, #MyFarmBill, Food Waste Challenge, Feds Feed Families campaign, and more.

Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM): Highlights include:

- Prepared documentation, including Performance Work Statements (PWS) for the 2014 Certification and Accreditation of one OC System, Continuous Monitoring (CM) of another system and Drupal Migration of USDA.GOV;
- OC had zero material weaknesses and 14 control deficiencies. All control deficiencies were addressed and 3 were corrected. The remaining 11 were deviations with signed and approved Risk Based Decision forms submitted to ASOC. Had 1 security incident for Cyber Security and ASOC during this fiscal year;
- Security staff performed annual Assessment & Authorization (A&A) activities for two systems and annual Continuous Monitoring activity for one server comprised of reviewing and/or updating and testing approximately 150 controls on each system. All other deadlines have been met.
The staff responded to almost 89,000 requests for information during 2014 including:
 - 67,742 self-served information hotline requests
 - 9,415 submitted questions to Ask the Expert
 - 7,337 telephone/hotline requests
 - 3,727 U.S. and foreign mail requests
 - 633 direct e-mail requests
 - 3 telephone and letter requests from Members of Congress; and
- Coordinated implementation of *Ask the Expert*, a Customer Relations Management system for USDA.gov. This application provides self-service support for Web users to have questions answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service was asked 367,084 questions; the system answered 357,669 for a self-service rate of 97.4 percent. This is a 0.5 percent increase over the last year.

Branding Events Exhibits and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD): Highlights include:

- Assisted national constituent organizations by serving as the conduit for their events and providing current information about agricultural related briefings to a total of 1,500 people at USDA headquarters. The constituent team arranged briefings for international agricultural constituents from Japan, China, Italy, and Germany;
- The editorial review and clearance team cleared 228 manuscripts and 218 camera-ready proofs for printing or Web release; worked with agencies on the One USDA initiative, OIG Congressional Reports, and more;
- BEEERD continues to provide leadership to define, protect and promote the One USDA Brand. This leadership included reviewing partnerships agreements and contracts to ensure appropriate commercial use of the USDA Brand; reviewing statements of work to ensure the incorporation of the USDA Brand is appropriate; monitoring social media for inappropriate use of the USDA Brand, replying to inquiries both from various entities including the public on inappropriate use of the USDA Brand and providing guidance on issuance of cease and desist memorandums in the event the USDA logo is inappropriately used. This leadership of the USDA Brand included development, alteration, clearance, and posting of Departmental Directives such as the USDA logo and seal DR 5160-001; as well as a new USDA Facility Signage Directive 5160-003 with the development of new One USDA Facility Signage Visual Style Guide for the consistent use USDA signature. The agencies are utilizing the USDA logo successfully reducing public confusion by phasing out the agency logos;
- OMB M12-12 and BEEERD's Events/Exhibit Team (EET) was integrated into the USDA Departmental Travel and Conference Regulations with the Chief Financial Officer USDA-wide team to ensure compliance. EET continues to develop the Departmental Regulations and Procedures for travel and USDA wide conference coordination. Additionally, EET continues to successfully provide USDA with a consolidated effort for exhibiting by co-locating at many of the conferences across the nation and establishing the OC SharePoint as the USDA wide schedule calendar for conferencing; and
- BEEERD was instrumental in the creation of the USDA wide Employee Art and Agricultural Competition as part of USDA's Cultural Transformation. In its third year over 275 entries came from across the nation and the globe, including Afghanistan.

Photography Services Division (PSD): Highlights include:

- The Photography Services Division had 7,680,295 hits on the Flickr site of agricultural subjects;
- Completed 680 work requests in 2014 for photographic;
- PSD also reviewed and cleared 140 photo requests for publication, resulting in review and approval of 1475 images; and
- The library conversion project converted 3,600 images from CD to TIF files to be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration.

Photography Services Division provided photographic coverage for the following events:

- 2014 Outlook Forum;
- Rural Opportunity Investment Conference;
- Secretary w/FLOTUS at White House Garden (3);
- 2014 Feds Feed Families Campaign;
- National Congress of AM Indian Tribal National Summit;
- Secretary Vilsack with Secretary of Transportation Foxx interview;
- National Environmental Justice Conference;
- People's Garden –Multimedia projects: Bee Pollinators, Honey Harvest, and Rain Barrels;
- Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservation in NM, WA, MS and WI; and.
- Photo documentation of the Porch Band of Creek Indians activities in Alabama.

Printing Division (PD): Highlights include:

- Managed 9 printing contracts that were written by GPO for use by USDA. PD is the Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) who order the printing work with these contractors, determining printing schedules, specifications, and costs. These contracts allow USDA to achieve the most economical cost and meet critical deadlines required by USDA customers;
- Managed and utilized the Program 960 Simplified Purchase Agreement (SPA) for OC and several customer

agencies. PD is the liaison with the GPO to establish the contract and represent USDA customers when disputes occur. USDA customers are able to be involved hands-on in the selection and production process of their print jobs, thus saving time and allowing them to personally track their print procurements. Over 150 print jobs were placed on the SPA contract in 2014; and

- Another important procurement activity is the use of the GPO Express program. The GPO has partnered with Federal Express (FED-EX) Office for copier/duplicating services. This program works effectively with many of our customers who travel and require materials for meetings, seminars, etc. The program provides established prices, schedules, and the assurance of a standard product nationwide. The GPO Express Program for 2014 has reported purchases of \$254,577.29, with an average transaction of \$210.22. This is a \$480,757.57 savings, i.e., 65.4 percent off of the retail price of \$735,334.86. By using these contracts, USDA is in compliance with Title 44, U.S. Code, Public Printing, and all Government printing and binding regulations.

Listed below are figures showing publications and forms printed during 2014, with comparative figures for 2013. In 2014, GPO reported 4,818 USDA print orders processed with 1,959 performed in the Washington, DC area totaling \$4,138,560.34 (these figures do not include USDA In-House facility).

<u>Publications and Forms Printed</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>
Dollars billed to USDA by GPO (nationwide)	\$8,808,322.22	\$7,846,200.06
Dollars billed to USDA by GPO (Wash. area)	\$3,040,088.12	\$4,138,560.34
Dollars billed to USDA by GPOEXPRESS Program (nationwide)	\$279,123.90	\$254,577.29
Print jobs processed through GPO and/or contract (Wash. area)	2,623	1,959

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Summary of Budget and Performance
Statement of Agency Goals and Objectives

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 possible 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. The activities of OC have expanded as new technology has become available and as additional segments of the public have become constituents.

USDA Strategic Goal: Create a USDA for the 21st Century that is High-Performing, Efficient, and Adaptable

Department Objective: Develop a customer-centric, inclusive, and high-performing workforce by investing in and engaging employees to improve service delivery (Objective 5.1)

Department Objective: Build a safe, secure, and efficient workplace by leveraging technology and shared solutions across organizational boundaries (Objective 5.2)

Department Objective: Maximize the return on taxpayer investment in USDA through enhanced stewardship activities and focused program evaluations (Objective 5.3)

Agency Strategic Goal	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
Provide maximum support to all mission areas of the Department in the development of programs, in creating awareness among the American public about USDA’s major initiatives and services, and providing emergency public information and warnings when necessary.	Provide resources and state-of-the art facilities to enhance communication by USDA and its agencies. Provide efficient coordination and instructive guidance to enhance communication by USDA and its agencies.	All programs and activities within OC. All programs and activities within OC.	Intended audiences receive the material or information distributed, and intended audiences have access to tools to answer their questions and provide feedback on issues.

Key Performance Measures:

Percent of prepared materials that are accepted for use by commercial media outlets and the public.							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Percent	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Cost (thousands)	\$8,620	\$8,458	\$7,137	\$7,385	\$7,051	\$6,901	\$7,327
Percent of ongoing and information campaigns timely completed and promoting unified accomplishment of USDA mission area in an effective manner.							
	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Cost (thousands)	\$963	\$945	\$877	\$908	\$867	\$849	\$901

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Selected Past Accomplishments Toward Achievement of Key Outcome:

- Kicked-off development of an Enterprise-level Open Source Content Management System that will lower costs by eliminating the current separate content management and development platforms.
- Successfully launched USDA's New Farmers website that provides a centralized collection of resources for new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Website consistently ranks in the top 3 most viewed pages for all of USDA.
- Coordinated implementation of *Ask the Expert*, a Customer Relations Management system for USDA.gov. This application provides self-service support for Web users to have questions answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service was asked 367,084 questions; the system answered 357,669 for a self-service rate of 97.4 percent.
- Established a Department-wide Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for communications services and products, which is expected to lower costs across the Department.
- Oversaw the GPO Express Program for the Department, which saved over \$480,000 in printing costs.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2016 Proposed Resource Level:

Commercial media outlets will receive the materials and information distributed by the Department; that there is a high acceptance and use of prepared materials; and that OC facilities can produce products meeting industry standards in ways that continue to enhance OC's ability to advance the mission of USDA and priorities of the Administration, while serving and engaging the public in a fair, equal, transparent and easily accessible manner.

Strategies for achieving performance in 2016:

- OC plans to continue to evaluate its strategic objectives and performance measures in light of revised budget authority to ensure it can provide the maximum support possible to agencies and the public.
- Continue to expand the use of appropriate open-source tools in support of USDA.gov to reduce costs to the Department and agencies.
- Continue to explore strategic sourcing strategies for the acquisition of communications products and services.
- Use audio and video teleconferences to assist USDA agencies in reducing their travel costs associated with regular meetings and training.
- Provide centralized operations for design and production, review/clearance, and distribution of messages and information (video, print, and broadcast) to USDA's primary constituencies and the general public to ensure that they get understandable and relevant information about USDA programs and services.
- Coordinate the development of communications plans for all USDA cross-cutting or interagency initiatives showing each mission's and/or agency's information role.
- Maintain capability to provide all of OC's basic services in a crisis situation even if it involves a relocation of senior Department officials from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Goal Funding Matrix
(Dollars in thousands)

<u>Program/ Program Items</u>	<u>2013</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2014</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2015</u> <u>Enacted</u>	<u>Increase or</u> <u>Decrease</u>	<u>2016</u> <u>Estimate</u>
Department Strategic Goal 5: Create a USDA for the 21st Century that is High-performing, Efficient, and Adaptable					
Department Objective 5.1: Develop a customer-centric, inclusive, and high-performing workforce by investing in and engaging employees to improve service delivery					
Office of Communications.....	\$2,764	\$2,639	\$2,583	+\$159	\$2,742
Staff Years.....	17	18	17	+2	19
Department Objective 5.2: Build a safe, secure, and efficient workplace by leveraging technology and shared solutions across organizational boundaries					
Office of Communications.....	\$2,764	\$2,639	\$2,583	+\$160	\$2,743
Staff Years.....	18	18	18	+1	19
Department Objective 5.3: Maximize the return on taxpayer investment in USDA through enhanced stewardship activities and focused program evaluations					
Office of Communications.....	\$2,765	\$2,640	\$2,584	+\$159	\$2,743
Staff Years.....	18	19	18	+1	19
Office of Communications.....	\$8,293	\$7,918	\$7,750	+\$478	\$8,228
Staff Years.....	53	55	53	+4	57

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Full Cost by Department Strategic Goal

(Dollars in thousands)

Department Strategic Goal: Create a USDA for the 21st Century that is High-performing, Efficient, and Adaptable

Program/ Program Items	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Enacted	2016 Estimate
<u>Office of Communications</u>				
Administrative costs (direct).....	\$6,796	\$6,992	\$6,770	\$7,181
Indirect costs.....	1,497	926	980	1,047
Total Costs.....	8,293	7,918	7,750	8,228
Total FTEs.....	53	55	53	57
Performance Measure:				
Percent of prepared materials that are accepted for use by commercial media Measure.....	95%	95%	95%	95%
Cost per measure (unit cost).....	7,385	7,051	6,901	7,327
Performance Measure:				
completed and promoting unified accomplishments of Measure.....	95%	95%	95%	95%
Cost per measure (unit cost).....	908	867	849	901