

2019 President's Budget  
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, 2017, there were 55 full-time permanent employees all stationed in Washington, D.C.

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	<u>2016 Actual</u>		<u>2017 Actual</u>		<u>2018 Estimate</u>		<u>2019 President's Budget</u>	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
<b>Salaries and Expenses:</b>								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$7,500	50	\$7,500	42	\$7,449	42	\$7,261	42
Lapsing Balances.....	-87	-	-281	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations.....	7,413	50	7,219	42	7,449	42	7,261	42
<b><u>Obligations under other USDA appropriations:</u></b>								
Agency Photo Services.....	30	-	54	-	50	-	50	-
Employee Details.....	90	-	136	-	-	-	-	-
Executive Scheduling.....	128	-	17	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA.....	248	-	207	-	50	-	50	-
<b><u>Working Capital Fund a/:</u></b>								
Creative Media and Broadcast Center (USDA).....	4,171	15	5,184	18	7,325	28	7,268	29
Creative Media and Broadcast Center (Non-USDA)....	922	3	560	2	1,254	-	365	-
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	5,093	18	5,744	20	8,579	28	7,633	29
Total, OC.....	12,754	68	13,170	62	16,078	70	14,944	71

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

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Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary a/

Item	2019 President's			
	<u>2016 Actual</u>	<u>2017 Actual</u>	<u>2018 Estimate</u>	<u>Budget</u>
	Wash. D.C.	Wash. D.C.	Wash. D.C.	Wash. D.C.
SES.....	2	2	2	2
GS-15.....	10	10	8	8
GS-14.....	12	12	8	8
GS-13.....	11	11	8	8
GS-12.....	10	10	8	8
GS-11.....	5	4	3	3
GS-9.....	5	4	3	3
GS-7.....	2	2	2	2
GS-4.....	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Perm.</b>				
Positions.....	57	55	42	42
<b>Total, Perm. Full-Time</b>				
Employment EOY.....	57	55	42	42
Staff Year Est.....	50	42	42	42

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

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Shared Funding Projects  
(Dollars in thousands)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>President's Budget</u>
<b>Working Capital Fund:</b>				
Administration:				
Materiel Management Service Center.....	\$26	\$20	\$27	\$27
HR Enterprise System Management.....	1	1	1	1
Mail and Reproduction Management.....	75	94	106	107
Procurement Operations.....	11	29	42	51
Integrated Procurement System.....	7	7	15	15
Subtotal.....	120	151	191	201
Administrative Support Cost:				
ASC - Working Capital Fund Controller.....	60	-	-	-
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	64	193	565	597
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	22	21	20	20
Financial Management Services.....	52	126	69	70
Internal Control Support Services.....	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	74	147	89	90
Information Technology:				
Client Technology Service.....	150	564	420	424
NITC/USDA.....	688	662	723	723
Telecommunications Services.....	72	46	46	64
Subtotal.....	910	1,272	1,189	1,211
Correspondence Management.....	2	2	2	2
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	1,230	1,765	2,036	2,101
<b>Departmental Shared Cost Programs:</b>				
1890's USDA Initiatives.....	2	2	3	3
Classified National Security Information.....	1	1	1	1
Continuity of Operations Planning.....	2	2	2	2
Emergency Operations Center.....	2	2	2	2
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program.....	2	2	1	1
Human Resources Transformation (inc. Diversity Council).....	1	1	1	1
Identity and Access Management (HSPD-12).....	5	5	5	5
Medical Services.....	6	6	7	7
People's Garden.....	1	1	-	-
Personnel and Document Security.....	3	2	1	1
Pre-authorizing Funding.....	3	3	3	3
Retirement Processor / Web Application.....	-	-	-	-
Sign Language Interpreter Services.....	-	-	-	-
TARGET Center.....	1	1	1	1
USDA 1994 Program.....	1	1	1	1
Virtual University.....	1	1	1	1
Visitor Information Center.....	-	-	-	-
Total, Departmental Shared Cost Programs.....	31	30	29	29
<b>E-Gov:</b>				
Enterprise Human Resources Intigration.....	2	2	2	2
E-Training.....	2	-	-	-
Integrated Acquisition Environment - Loans and Grants.....	-	-	-	-
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	1	-	-	-
Total, E-Gov.....	5	2	2	2
Agency Total.....	1,266	1,797	2,067	2,132

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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

1 For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$43,320,000~~] \$42,498,000, of which not to exceed  
2 [~~\$5,017,000~~] \$4,850,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary; [not to  
3 exceed \$501,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations;] not to exceed \$800,000  
4 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development; not to exceed  
5 [~~\$1,486,000~~] \$1,448,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security [and Emergency  
Coordination]; not to exceed \$1,672,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public  
Engagement; [not to exceed \$1,171,000 shall be available for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach;] not to  
exceed [~~\$22,936,000~~] \$23,376,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for  
Administration, of which [~~\$22,137,000~~] \$22,501,000 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 [~~\$3,843,000~~]  
\$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 [~~\$7,449,000~~] \$7,261,000 shall be available for the Office of  
6 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*  
7 appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: *Provided further, That*  
not to exceed [~~\$11,000~~] \$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 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.

The first change deletes the language for the Office of Tribal Relations, since it is being realigned within the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

The second change is to add language for the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development.

The third change is to change the name to the Office of Homeland Security.

The fourth change is to add language for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

The fifth change is to delete specific language for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach, since being realigned within the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

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The sixth change is to add language for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and the Assistant Secretary for Administration for administrative support within their offices.

The seventh change is to adjust the amount for the reception and representation expenses.

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Budget Estimate, 2019.....	\$7,261,000
2018 Annualized Continuing Resolution.....	7,449,000
Change in Appropriation.....	-188,000

Project Statement

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

Program	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Office of Communications...	\$7,500	50	\$7,500	42	\$7,449	42	-\$188 (1)	-	\$7,261	42
Lapsing Balances.....	-87	-	-281	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	7,413	50	7,219	42	7,449	42	-188	-	7,261	42

Project Statement

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

Program	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Communications...	\$7,413	50	\$7,219	42	\$7,449	42	-\$188 (1)	-	\$7,261	42
Lapsing Balances.....	87	-	281	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	7,500	50	7,500	42	7,449	42	-188	-	7,261	42

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Justification of Increases and Decreases

The base funds will continue to support the mission of the Office of Communications (OC), which is to provide leadership, expertise, counsel, and coordination for the development of communication strategies, these functions are vital to the overall formation, awareness, and acceptance of USDA programs and policies. OC serves as the principal USDA point of contact for consistent dissemination and 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 \$188,000 (\$7,449,000 and 42 staff years available in 2018.).

a. A decrease of \$188,000 in non-personnel costs.

The proposed budget reduction will be absorbed through reductions in travel and deferring, and possibly eliminating, some supply purchases.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years

(Dollars in thousands and Staff Years (SYs))

State/Territory	2016 Actual		2017 Actual		2018 Estimate		2019 President's Budget	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
District of Columbia.....	\$7,413	50	\$7,219	42	\$7,449	42	\$7,261	42
Lapsing Balances.....	87	-	281	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	<u>7,500</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>7,500</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>7,449</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>7,261</u>	<u>42</u>

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Classification by Objects  
(Dollars in thousands)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>President's Budget</u>
<b>Personnel Compensation:</b>				
Washington D.C.....	5,017	4,407	\$4,831	\$4,940
11 Total personnel compensation.....	5,017	4,407	4,831	4,940
12 Personnel benefits.....	1,533	1,300	1,400	1,416
Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	6,550	5,707	6,231	6,356
<b>Other Objects:</b>				
21.0 Travel and transportation of persons.....	103	83	55	40
22.0 Transportation of things.....	1	1	5	5
23.1 Rental payments GSA.....	3	4	4	4
23.3 Communications, utilities, and misc. charges..	240	235	337	322
24.0 Printing and reproduction.....	2	20	40	25
25.2 Other services from non-Federal sources.....	47	69	135	110
25.3 Other purchases of goods and services				
from Federal sources.....	427	773	404	296
26.0 Supplies and materials.....	12	46	65	30
31.0 Equipment.....	28	281	173	73
42.3 Litigation Fees.....	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Objects.....	863	1,512	1,218	905
99.9 Total, new obligations.....	7,413	7,219	7,449	7,261
DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)...	\$32	\$35	\$35	\$35
<b>Position Data:</b>				
Average Salary (dollars), SES Position.....	\$157,000	\$151,375	\$154,403	\$157,490
Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$90,920	\$89,607	\$92,269	\$93,974
Average Grade, GS Position.....	12.8	13.0	13.1	13.1

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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 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): 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, providing assurances to the public that the Department stands behind products and services that carry the USDA logo. The Constituent Affairs component within BEEERD manages briefings at USDA headquarters with major stakeholders, including national and international delegations. They work to provide farm, trade, consumer associations, 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 has final Departmental authorization and clearance of traditional and online publications going out to the public from the Department's 8 mission areas and 36 agencies and staff offices. This Division ensures compliance with Federal regulations and USDA Departmental Regulations and guidelines.

Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC): 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 leadership and agencies. CMBC is responsible for the creation and oversight of a wide range of communication products, including video, print, exhibits, and web. CMBC provides services to agencies for visitor centers, information campaigns, radio and TV public service announcements, webcasts, satellite media interviews, and audio and video conferencing.

CMBC supports 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. CMBC promotes the integrated use of traditional media in 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 national, regional, and local USDA offices, and to other government agencies, upon request.

CMBC's USDA radio service produces daily news reports for radio broadcasters and consumers via the web. In FY 2017, the total number of USDA radio stories-actualities produced was 2,430. CMBC also provides technical support and coverage for news conferences with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other top government officials.

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Digital Communications Division (DCD): The DCD manages and maintains the USDA.gov web portal and ensures content is available, accessible, and relevant to the Department's diverse stakeholders. DCD 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 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, and the use of emerging tools or technologies. Additionally, DCD works to ensure collaboratively 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, which 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 (OMB). 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.

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, Forest Fire line documentation (Red Card certified photographer on staff), food photography, 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, working with social media engines 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, a commercial off the shelf solution.

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Press Operations (PO): PO does 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 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.

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 OMB. 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.

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.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

Branding Events Exhibits and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD): BEEERD continues to provide leadership to define, protect, and promote the One USDA Brand. This leadership includes reviewing partnership 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 Federal agencies and the public on the appropriate use of the USDA Brand, and providing guidance on issuance of both demand or cease-and-desist memoranda in the event the USDA or an agency logo is inappropriately used. This leadership of the USDA Brand includes educating and informing, as well as enforcement of the Departmental Directives. Examples of such work include the negotiations still in progress on the Cacao for Peace Initiative with both private and public use of the USDA logo in Colombia. This use needs to be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis, and such a contract is in development. Recently, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) logo appeared on a website selling apparel. BEEERD contacted the website apparel company and the regional FSA office and informed them that the use of agency logos was phased out in 2013 and as a result the website was shut down.

BEEERD was instrumental in the creation of the USDA-wide Employee Art and Agricultural Competition. Now in its 6th-year, entries come from across the Nation and around the globe. Based on our experience in running such a competition, BEEERD was asked to run the Secretary's first initiative, the Rename the Cage Competition for USDA employees. The outcome, "The Front Porch", was chosen from the top five finalists, out of more than 1,197 unique entries and 8,328 votes.

BEEERD represents OC on several committees and workgroups, including Civil Rights, Office of Operations Employee Engagement, Small Farmers Initiative, Women Farmers Committee, Plain Writing Initiative, and more.

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BEEERD: Highlights include:

- Departmental–level review and clearance of:
  - Progress and Challenges in Global Food Security (ERS, 152 pages);
  - Food Defense Preparedness and Recall Exercise Package (FSIS, 240 pages);
  - International Journal of Poisonous Plant Research (ARS, 224 pages); and
  - Grow It, Try It, Like It! Fun with Fruits and Vegetables at Family Child Care Kit (FNS, 431 Pages).
- Hosted the 400 constituents of the National Farmers Union with Secretary Perdue and USDA officials as speakers.
- Hosted Outstanding Young Farmer Winners at USDA with the Secretary of Agriculture speaking.

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

- Hosted over 20,000 audio training and informational outreach webinars for agencies.
- Partnered with the FNS to create a video series on the benefits of breastfeeding, to be shown at Women Infants and Children program clinics and other opportunities. This outreach delivers important information for the health of infants and mothers.
- Provided video production for a series of programs and public service announcements on the USDA Healthy Soil initiative, to educate farmers and ranchers on the importance of using cover crops and techniques that protect and enhance their soil, for a more sustainable agriculture industry.
- Worked with FNS redesigning the Menu Planner for School Meals. This tool is used by school personnel to plan, prepare, serve and market healthy school meals.
- Production of a new USDA Tribal Resource Guide.
- Produced several videos promoting USDA efforts to recruit and help U.S. military veterans to consider transitioning to civilian life in agriculture.

USDA Radio: Highlights include:

- USDA Results WebBlog Audio Segments: A total of seven segments for this USDA based project (<https://medium.com/usda-results>) were produced by our radio staff in the first two months of FY 2017. The breakdown by month aired is as follows:
  - October 2016: Four audio segments
  - November 2016: Three audio segments

Digital Communications Division (DCD): Highlights include:

- Completed and launched USDA.gov's Drupal migration and redesign initiative as well as launched the USDA's Enterprise Drupal Platform. Drupal is an open-source web content management system OC now uses to manage online content publishing, page creation, and collaboration. OC's Enterprise platform allows for approved websites to share the same hosting and maintenance solution as USDA.gov.
- Led the Department-wide effort to redesign all agency and office websites to conform to the USDA Web Standards and Guidelines.
- Successfully absorbed OC's Photography Division into the Digital Communications Division to streamline and expand creative products on the web and social media.
- Launched the Disaster Resource Center (DRC), a clearinghouse for USDA disaster related resources based off a matrix developed by Rural Development. The DRC system will allow subject matter experts to contribute to the knowledgebase, resulting in a comprehensive and up-to-date clearinghouse of all disaster relevant USDA resources. Throughout the year, we've used the DRC as the home for many disasters, including wildfires, the Louisiana flooding, and Hurricane Matthew.

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- Continued management of New Farmers, a website 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 Resource Management (ITRM): Highlights include:

- Our security staff performed annual Federal Information Security Management Act reporting activities for all of our systems. All of our activities comprised of reviewing and/or updating and testing approximately 150 controls on each system in Cyber Security Assessment & Management . Agriculture Security Operations Center's Oversight and Compliance Division is kept apprised of all OC cyber statuses via a bi-weekly cyber liaison conference call. All other deadlines have been met.
- Continued management 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 729,603 questions; the system answered 718,324, for a self-service rate of 98.5 percent. There were 11,279 questions submitted to "Ask the Expert." This is a 0.2 percent increase in effectiveness since FY 2016. In FY 2017, approximately 229,000 more questions were answered.
- The Information Services staff responded to approximately 58,000 requests for information during FY 2017 including:
  - 7,512 telephone/hotline requests;
  - 3,499 U.S. and foreign mail requests;
  - 817 direct e-mail requests;
  - 12 telephone and letter requests from Member of Congress;
  - 7,417 incidents/inquiries from Ask the Expert; and
  - 38,299 self-served information hotline requests.

Photography Services Division (PSD): Highlights include:

- Had over 13.5 million hits on the Flickr site;
- Completed 703 work requests in FY 2017 for photographic services, which included: Passports, portraits, studio, local and field assignments documenting the Department and agency programs;
- Printed 850 photos for Secretary requirements and agency exhibits and displays; and
- Reviewed and cleared 1,406 images for 173 publications.

Photography Services Division provided photographic coverage for the following events:

- Confirmation and Swearing-in Ceremony of Secretary of Agriculture;
  - SCORE & Veterans Project
  - White House Farmer's Roundtable
  - 2017 AgOutlook Forum
  - FFA 90<sup>th</sup> Convention

Press Operations (PO): Highlights include:

- 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.
- Organized press for travel for Secretary and Deputy Secretary; and
- Worked with agencies to respond to press inquiries, craft communications plans, and drafted and edited press materials.

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Printing Division (PD): Highlights include:

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. In FY 2017, the Department had purchases totaling \$275,218.25 the retail price would have been \$892,733.82, resulting in a \$617,515.56 (69.2 percent) savings. There are currently 12 agencies enrolled in the program and a total of 1,169 orders were placed. 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 FY 2017, with comparative figures for FY 2016. In FY 2017, GPO reported 4,023 USDA print orders processed nationwide; of those 1,785 were processed in the Washington, DC area totaling \$2,323,168 (these figures do not include USDA In-House facility).

<u>Publications and Forms Printed</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>FY 2017</u>
Dollars billed to USDA by GPO (nationwide)	\$8,318,675	\$8,585,877
Dollars billed to USDA by GPO (Wash. area)	\$3,404,550	\$2,323,168
Dollars billed to USDA by GPO Express Program (nationwide)	\$262,421	\$275,218
Print jobs processed through GPO and/or contract (Wash. area)	1,736	1,785

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 Subcabinet members, Agency Heads, and their staff with speechwriting.

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Summary of Budget and Performance

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.

OC serves U.S. farmers, ranchers, producers and rural Americans by delivering 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 a wide-variety of media channels and directly to our stakeholders. In recent years, 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 and the U.S. and global economies. The success of the Department's initiatives—and the success of U.S. agriculture, both domestically and abroad—is directly supported by adequately resourced communications and public education campaigns that allow the public to easily learn about and access information on the Department's programs. OC campaigns directly support USDA Strategic Goal 1 by ensuring USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, with integrity and a focus on customer service, and successful information campaigns also support each of the other six USDA Strategic Goals by publicizing programs directly tied to those goals. OC gauges success through real-world measures. The percentage of OC materials used by commercial media outlets and the public is a valid measure of the real-world utility of information provided by OC. Likewise, OC measures customer satisfaction and return on investment by tracking the progress of campaigns, which are often tied to program deadlines.

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA Programs and Delivered Efficiently, Effectively and with Integrity and a Focus on Customer Service.

Key Performance Measures:

OC has determined the two Key Process Indicators for the office offer a reliable measure of tracking the timeliness and usefulness of USDA information campaigns since media outlets do not allocate their limited space to material their readers, listeners or viewers do not find useful or informative. The first KPI allow OC to measure how often outside customers, both media outlets and organizations, find USDA material to be applicable by utilizing the information. The second KPI measures OC's ability to deliver information within deadlines. Both KPIs measure OCs effectiveness in support of USDA's Strategic Goal 1's emphasis on delivering programs efficiently and effectively, as well as our effectiveness in promoting programs that support Goals 2-7. OC is a service office that is the principal USDA contact point for the dissemination of consistent, timely information to the public, meaning OC supports all seven of the goals listed in the USDA Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022. OC's seven divisions help to coordinate and manage effective communications functions and materials across most of USDA's 17 agencies and 18 offices, the state and county offices across the United States, and our 96 posts overseas. OC employees are assigned to support each mission area, agency and service office, and often support multiple clients daily.

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Performance Measure	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Target	2018 Target	2019 Target
a. Percent of prepared materials accepted for use by commercial media outlets & the public	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	\$7,385	\$7,051	\$6,847	\$6,603	\$6,666	\$6,467	\$6,143

Performance Measure	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Target	2018 Target	2019 Target
a. 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%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	\$908	\$867	\$846	\$810	\$821	\$794	\$755

Selected Past Accomplishments Toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

- Continued management of New Farmers, a website 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.
- Continued management 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 729,603 questions; the system answered 718,324, for a self-service rate of 98.5 percent. There were 11,279 questions submitted to “Ask the Expert.” This is a 0.2 percent increase in effectiveness since FY 2016. In FY 2017, approximately 229,443 more questions were answered.
- USDA radio created 2,430 news stories, and produced and aired 572 features during FY 2017.
- Oversaw the GPO Express Program for the Department, which saved more than \$617,516 in printing costs by leveraging the combined purchase power of more than 200 Federal Government organizations to negotiate discounts up to 80 percent below retail pricing at participating local printing vendors nationwide. The actual retail cost of these printing jobs would have been \$892,734, but the discounted cost through the GPO Express Program was only \$275,218, resulting in a savings of \$617,516.

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Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2019 Proposed Resource Level:

- 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.