

PRESIDENTIAL E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND LINES OF BUSINESS

USDA’S PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND LINES OF BUSINESS:

USDA participates in 12 Presidential E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business (LoB); however, this document describes only nine Presidential E-Government Initiatives and LoB, that are funded through USDA distributed funding. By participating in the E-Government Initiatives and LoBs, USDA has improved its business processes and program delivery to its customers, employees, and partners. Through these efforts, USDA has been able to work with other Federal agencies to streamline common areas of business delivery (e.g. rulemaking, payroll, and grants management) and learn from best practices throughout the government. The Department will continue to implement these Initiatives and LoBs to achieve further benefits for its customers.

Budget Line of Business (BLoB):

The BLoB provides benefits to partner agencies by encouraging best practices crossing all aspects of Federal budgeting – from budget formulation and execution to collaboration, human capital needs, and providing tools and resources. USDA has more than 1,000 users registered for the MAX Federal Community site. The Community site can be used for sharing information, collaboratively drafting documents (including the direct-editing of documents posted on the site), supporting workgroups, submitting central reports, and more. In addition, USDA has used MAX Collect exercises and associated publishing capabilities to collect, store, process and publish information.

Benefits.gov:

Launched in 2002, Benefits.gov is one of the earliest E-Government initiatives and was established as the official benefits website of the U.S. government. Prior to Benefits.gov, citizens looking for government benefit information had to search through a complicated maze of web pages, often unsuccessfully. Today, millions of citizens have online access to information and can keep up with the latest benefit-related information by subscribing to the quarterly eNewsletter, as well as by following Benefits.gov on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. USDA currently has 313 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on Benefits.gov, including food and nutrition programs administered by State agencies. In 2020, USDA programs generated over 4.9 million Forms of Assistance page views on Benefits.gov; over 1,028,400 transfers from Benefits.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and over 1,000 transfers from USDA websites to Benefits.gov.

Through Benefits.gov, USDA provides information on over 300 programs related to food assistance, business and farm loans, crop insurance, disaster assistance and more. Participation in Benefits.gov supports USDA's goal to provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply, by helping increase public awareness of USDA benefit programs on food and nutrition. In addition, Benefits.gov provides information on many other USDA programs including farm loans, rural housing and business loans, and agricultural programs.

Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP):

The mission of DAIP is to provide disaster survivors with information, support, and services, to apply for disaster assistance through data-sharing efforts between Federal, tribal, State, local, and private partners. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, under the Department of Homeland Security, acts as the managing partner. The website DisasterAssistance.gov reduces the time needed by disaster survivors to apply for aid and check the status of claims, while decreasing redundancy in application forms and processes. Disaster survivors complete a mini survey online from their computer or mobile device and receive a personalized list of assistance of over 75 benefit and assistance programs available from the 17 participating federal agencies. In addition, participants can check on the status of applications and get updates via mobile alert or email. In 2020, USDA had 20 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on DisasterAssistance.gov that generated over 253,400 Forms of Assistance page views; over 84,000 transfers from DisasterAssistance.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and 3,091 transfers from USDA websites to DisasterAssistance.gov.

E-Rulemaking:

USDA uses the Federal-wide Regulations.gov website and the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) as the primary repository for promoting public participation and input into the development and issuance of USDA rulemaking. All USDA Federal Register rules, proposed rules, and notices are made available for public comment on E-Rulemaking’s Regulations.gov. Since USDA’s migration to FDMS, the system has made numerous upgrades to improve USDA’s own user interaction with FDMS in the management of its rulemaking dockets. In 2020, USDA

agencies posted 891 rules, proposed rules, and notice documents to Regulations.gov and 238,566 comments from the public in response.

Financial Management Line of Business (FMLoB):

In 2021, USDA OCFO's focus is on evolving its financial management systems to a next generation Intelligent Enterprise Suite (S4 Hana) that will streamline the business processes and to integrate financial management activities across USDA agencies. Key objectives include improved user experience and compliance with financial reporting and regulatory standards. The proposed transformation uses artificial intelligence, augmented and predictive analytics and planning capabilities to deliver consistent, accurate and standardized data for financial planning and reporting (both at the strategic and operational levels) throughout the department.”

Geospatial LoB:

The Enterprise Geospatial Management Office (EGMO) works to enhance and empower the USDA enterprise to meet mission requirements by providing strategic leadership, encouraging innovation, and facilitating communication and collaboration on geospatial activities and initiatives within the Department, and with public and private stakeholders in the broader geospatial community. In the Fall of 2020, OCIO established an executive Geospatial Information Officer position to lead the EGMO. Throughout 2020, USDA staff representing all mission areas developed the first USDA Enterprise Geospatial Strategic plan aligned with Geospatial Data Act requirements and in coordination with Federal Geographic Data Team. Topic areas included governance, data standards and delivery, modernization, reporting, and communications. That document was published in December 2020 and is being followed up with a multi-year deployment roadmap and Geospatial Department Manual in FY21. USDA actively participates in the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), leading or co-leading three National Spatial Data Asset (NGDA) Themes and supplying numerous different data sets to NDGA Themes across the NSDI.

Grants.gov:

Grants.gov, which houses information on over 1,000 grant programs and vets grant applications for Federal grant-making agencies, provides a common website and centralized location for federal agencies to post discretionary funding opportunities and for grant seekers to find and apply for them. In FY 2020, USDA posted 197 funding opportunities and received 10,973 applications.

Using the Grants.gov system makes it faster, easier and more cost effective for grant applicants to electronically interact with federal grant-making agencies. It also provides the following key benefits, among many others, to the grant community. (1) Helping the grant community learn more about available opportunities by centralizing and standardizing grant information, application packages and processes for finding and applying for federal grants. (2) Facilitating interaction with the federal government by streamlining the federal grants process. (3) Simplifying the grant application process to save applicants costs, time and hassle. (4) Making it easier to research and find federal grant opportunities through improved search capabilities – from a simple key word search to advanced searches over numerous grant opportunity categories – and having grant opportunities sent directly to grant applicant desktops through custom search profiles. (5) Making electronic grant application processing easier by increasing the ease-of-use through enhanced features common to the Web, such as downloaded and fillable forms, auto-populated data, error checks and email notifications. (6) Providing a secure and reliable source to apply for federal grants by validating grant applicants via a five-step registration process and ensuring website stability and security through Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology to encrypt transactional data and communications over the Internet.

Human Resources Line of Business (HRLoB):

The Human Resources Line of Business (HRLoB) improves USDA’s internal efficiency and effectiveness by streamlining and automating the exchange of employee human resource information. USDA has Released V2.1 (Oct 2019) of the Federal Human Capital Information Model (HCIM). The V2.1 release included key payroll elements and associated domain values/codes used for Leave and Earnings Statement and Time & Attendance. In FY20, HRLoB initiative Completed the Human Capital performance metrics reporting for inclusion in the Agency Workforce Dashboards. The metrics include Quality of Hiring vs. Time to Hire, Satisfaction with Training vs. Skill Level Improvement, Attrition Rates & Projections (for Mission Critical Occupations) and Retirement Projections (for Mission Critical Occupations). Also in FY 20, USDA Published Governmentwide Human Capital Federal Integrated Business Framework (HC[1]FIBF) Service Profiles for sub-functions. These FIBF Service Profiles contain a baseline set of services and standards to help inform agencies meet and advance their organization’s strategic Human Capital objectives. USDA continued to make waves by leading working groups with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from across the Federal government to develop FIBF Service Profiles for programs that include Employee Inquiry Processing, Employee Research, Workforce Planning, Human Capital Strategy, Position Classification and Position Management, Diversity and Inclusion and Employee Engagement.

Integrated Award Environment (IAE):

IAE uses innovative processes and technologies to improve systems and operations for those who award, administer, or receive federal financial assistance, contracts, and intergovernmental transactions. In 2020, USDA continued with Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) implementation. In the fourth quarter, USDA had 100 percent accuracy in File A, over 99 percent on File B, and 85 percent on File C. New reporting requirements were introduced, including the reporting of outlays and Disaster and Emergency Fund Codes. This negatively impacted File C reporting, but those issues have been addressed in the second quarter of 2021. These files transmit financial data to the US Department of Treasury as required by the DATA Act. USDA continues to improve and refine the DATA Act repository with additional automation and record validation. EzFedGrants reporting is now automated and reporting DATA Act records. USDA published a DATA Act Data Quality Plan in 2019 and a DATA Act Data Quality Framework to assist agencies in reporting and evaluation their data with the goal of improving data quality. In 2020 the IAE continued to integrate the SAM.gov website and issued initial guidance on a new Unique Entity Identifier which will supplant the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS). This will result in savings over time from the expense of DUNS contracts and met all DATA Act UEI needs when it was implemented in the first quarter of 2021.

The following table reflects estimated USDA contributions and funding amounts for 2019 through 2022 to the E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business.

E-Government Initiative¹ (Dollars in Thousands)	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Estimate	2022 Estimate
1. Budget Line of Business	\$110,000	\$109,997	\$119,998	\$120,001
2. Benefits.gov	-422,908	462,501	452,186	439,835
3. Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan	106,070	106,070	106,070	106,070
4. Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI)	1,860,138	---	---	---
5. E-Rulemaking	580,067	553,132	610,195	750,211
6. Financial Management Line of Business	167,510	167,510	167,510	167,510
7. Geospatial Line of Business	225,000	225,000	225,000	225,000
8. Grants.gov	473,087	484,000	496,000	510,000
9. Human Resources Line of Business	273,913	273,913	273,913	273,913
10. Integrated Award Environment ⁴	4,048,189	2,731,401	2,731,401	2,731,401
USDA TOTAL	8,266,882	5,113,524	5,182,274	5,323,941