

PRESIDENTIAL E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND LINES OF BUSINESS

Benefits of USDA's Participation in Presidential E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business:

Budget Formulation and Execution LoB (BFELoB):

- The BFELoB 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;
- To benefit all agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the BFELoB continues to work with the Department of Treasury, as the system owner, in the advancement of the Budget Formulation and Execution Manager (BFEM), the first shared service budget formulation system;
- USDA currently has over 4,000 registered users of the MAX Federal Community. The Community site is commonly used for sharing information, collaboratively drafting documents (including the direct-editing of documents posted on the site), supporting workgroups, submitting central reports, and much more;
- MAX Collect has capabilities to collect, store, process and publish information from multiple sources. As information is collected it is automatically compiled and published real-time using MAX Publication Services, with structured numeric data dynamically displayed using MAX Analytics;
- The Budgeting Capabilities Self-Assessment Tool (BCSAT) is a survey tool used to collect information from budget personnel about various aspects of the budget process at their agency. Results from the initial survey are being used to identify areas where additional training or automation could be beneficial;
- BFELoB's Human Capital Federal Budget Core Competency Framework was developed as a resource for USDA to use in their internal workforce planning initiatives. The framework includes the "Budget Career Road Map", a set of Core Competencies, Key Behaviors, and Proficiency Levels for budget professionals. This is helpful in assessing skills and gaps, as well as developing plans for targeted growth. In addition, the BFELoB Human Capital work group offers multiple technical and developmental training opportunities throughout the year. They have developed/sponsored a variety of training classes for government budget community which include both in-class and online courses; and
- Training material includes a series of four Budget Formulation Process Maps and a series of Budget Execution Process Maps depicting the major processes in Federal Budget Formulation and Execution. The maps provide standardized processes that can be used to train budget analysts. These processes have been incorporated into self-paced training courses. USDA has participated in developing and using the process maps and training modules for staff training.

Disaster Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP):

- DisasterAssistance.gov reduces the time needed to apply for aid and check the status of claims while decreasing redundancy in application forms and processes. The primary benefits include decreased confusion and frustration for disaster survivors, as well as, reductions in the time it takes disaster survivors to identify, apply for, and check the status of their assistance applications. Future phases of DAIP may provide cost savings for partner agencies that use DAIP as a web presence for their Forms of Assistance (FOAs);
- DAIP provides a range of metrics to the partner agencies each month to help illustrate the value of their partnership and provide valuable insights into survivor needs and interests with respect to each partner agency's FOAs. The following site metrics were reported for USDA 2014 usage (based on data available 9/15/2014):
 - 32,000 USDA FOA page views;
 - 2,689 Transfers to USDA's URL/domain from DisasterAssistance.gov;
 - 1,276 Links from USDA's domain to DisasterAssistance.gov; and
 - 241 Referrals from DisasterAssistance.gov's questionnaire with USDA FOAs that transferred into the site's registration process.
- Through DisasterAssistance.gov, USDA and its stakeholders are helped by providing referrals to and information on 20 USDA FOAs related to food assistance, business loans, farm loans and more. DAIP's outreach and education efforts also help to raise awareness of these FOAs among the agency's stakeholders at the Federal, tribal, state and local levels. During 2014, USDA added several new FOA to DisasterAssistance.gov, including 3 permanent agricultural disaster assistance programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014; and

- The portal provides qualitative cost savings related to decreased labor hours, automated tracking, reduced waste, fraud and abuse, and information-sharing, all of which helps DAIP and its partner agencies assist disaster survivors more effectively. These savings will almost certainly grow in relative proportion to the growth of the portal and interface developments.

Currently, 14 Federal agencies contribute to the portal, which offers applications for, or information about, 75 FOAs as well as news, information and resources to help individuals, families and businesses prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI):

- USDA continues to reap the benefits of the eOPF system. Since 2011, all USDA agencies have had the transfer functionality enabled, whereby eOPFs can be sent/received electronically to other agencies and to National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). This increases the efficiency and timeliness of the process and provides additional security of the Personally Identifiable Information contained in the eOPFs;
- In 2014, USDA began integrating our EOD (Enter on Duty) Online system with the eOPF system that will enable new hire documents and benefits forms to flow directly into eOPF, capitalizing on one time data entry. That functionality is expected to be available mid-2015. USDA is also looking at improving the data feeds from our payroll provider to reduce email error rates, a critical component of timely notification delivery;
- Conducted USDA eOPF working group meetings to discuss eOPF issues with Agencies and keep them aware of system enhancements and updates; and
- eOPF provides employees immediate access to their personnel forms and is available 24/7. It also reduces the cost associated with the storage, maintenance and retrieval of records.

E-Rulemaking:

- USDA's use of the Regulations.gov web site and the complimentary FDMS is the Department's primary area of focus for increasing the public's participation in the process of developing and issuing regulations. USDA's fourteen rule-making agencies completed migration to the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) on December 8, 2006. As a result, all USDA Federal Register rules, proposed rules, and notices have been made available for public comment on E-Rulemaking's Regulations.gov since that time; and
- The web site has made numerous improvements over the years to improve the user's experience, and as a result public participation has continued to increase since the site's inception. In 2007, USDA agencies posted 1,343 rules, proposed rules, and notice documents and received 9,773 comments from the public in response. In 2014, USDA agencies posted 1,162 rules, proposed rules, and notice documents. USDA received 47,590 comments from the public in response. That is more than 5-fold increase in public comment since the portal's launch in 2007. This is a direct demonstration of the public's increased participation in USDA's rulemaking process.

E-Training:

- AgLearn is USDA's implementation of the E-Training Presidential Initiative. E-Training and AgLearn provide a single, USDA-wide learning management system that replaced seven legacy, agency-specific systems and widespread manual tracking of training;
- The consolidation of training within AgLearn allows agencies to cooperate in developing, tracking, and purchasing training. Training that has proved successful for one agency can easily be made available for others, eliminating redundant costs for course development and sharing subject matter expertise to a broader audience;
- In 2014 the AgLearn program measured an estimated cost avoidance of about \$20 million. Considering that the AgLearn's decreasing budget was about \$5.2 million, this represents an overall USDA return on investment of approximately 400 percent;
- With its substantial buying power, AgLearn was able to renegotiate an enterprise license for SkillSoft content for USDA-wide use at significantly reduced costs. In addition, AgLearn negotiated a reduced rate for requesting agencies to the Rosetta Stone Suite of courses in 32 languages. Currently about 2,000 people in USDA have been provided Rosetta Stone licenses;
- More than 130,000 AgLearn users (including employees, contractors and partners) completed more than one million training events (e.g., online courses, webinars, and classes) during 2014. AgLearn delivered Department-wide Security Awareness, Privacy Basics, PII, Workplace Harassment Awareness, and Ethics mandatory trainings. AgLearn currently has more than 15,000 books in the training library and also includes

more than 8,000 online courses and training events. AgLearn also supports the Secretary's Individual Development Plan (IDP) initiative;

- In conjunction with USDA's OHRM, in 2014 AgLearn rolled out leadership competency models and related 360 degree assessments across USDA. This is part of a major program to improve leadership across USDA. By the end of 2014 more than 90% of the USDA SES corp had received a 360 degree assessment. This was the first phase of the roll-out. Over the next three years about 30,000 managers and supervisors in USDA will also receive 360 degree assessments;
- AgLearn signed up and started onboarding our third external client (the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board). These external clients 1) reduce the overall cost to government of training management and delivery, 2) help stabilize and supplement AgLearn's funding streams, and 3) provide external validation of the excellence and value of AgLearn; and
- Major AgLearn initiatives in 2015 and 2016 are: 1) providing ongoing support for the 360 degree assessments mentioned above, 2) signing up more external clients, and 3) continuing to make more courses available on mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones.

Financial Management LoB:

- The Financial Management Line of Business (FM LoB) is focused on financial systems improvements in coordination with the Chief Financial Officers Council (CFOC);
- There are thousands of interrelated systems and hundreds of stakeholders, including the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO);
- The Financial Management Line of Business (FM LoB) provides the Department of Agriculture (USDA) with standards, requirements, tools, and services to support USDA's financial management activities. USDA benefitted from information sharing across the Federal community on standards and best practices in implementing financial systems based on commercial software products used across the government;
- USDA's legacy financial system. FMMI is based upon SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) 6.0, a Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) software suite by SAP AG. SAP ERP 6.0 is an advanced, Web-based, financial-management system that provides general accounting, funds management, and financial-reporting capabilities;
- Since beginning operation in 2010, FMMI has been deployed to 28 of USDA's 29 administrative organizations. USDA also chairs the SAP Customer Control Board to exchange information and ensure that future product releases and enhancements are aligned with Federal standards;
- USDA also has a grants management module integrated with the financial system with three more USDA agencies adopting it in 2015 in addition to the Foreign Agriculture Service which piloted the system; and
- The new scope of the FM LoB has been expanded to encompass acquisitions, the Grants Management Line of Business (GM LoB) and all forms of Federal financial assistance. The creation of the Council of Federal Assistance Reform in 2011 helped in aligning the GM LoB goals and data transparency goals. GSA supports some of the specific financial management transparency solutions, including the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS). In 2015, USASpending.gov and sub recipient reporting will be taken over by the Department of Treasury. USDA has been a leader in government in providing feedback and system user testing for improving the various systems in System for Award and Management (SAM) and for USASpending.gov.

Geospatial LoB:

- US Department of Agriculture (USDA) fully supports the federal government intent of deploying the Geospatial Line-of-Business (GeoLOB) as the operational implementation of prior Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) geospatial infrastructure strategy, standards, and data coordination. As a participating member of the FGDC Steering Committee, USDA endorses the recent executive leadership strategy and goals. The GeoLOB is intended to support better governance through agency coordination and exchange of geospatial assets, while helping to reduce the federal government investment cost for these solutions. Most importantly, citizens will benefit from this collaborative platform approach as public services and data become more easily accessible. USDA anticipates an immediate return on investment from the GeoLOB with respect to improved use of centralized channels to distribute data and information to agricultural and natural resources management and conservation stakeholders;

- USDA seeks to define and validate NGP content management performance measures so as to determine data and service demand, capacity management, and public relevancy of USDA geospatial assets. With evidence of this ranking and use behavior, USDA can better attend to high value assets, align scarce resources, and increase the contribution to decision-making through enhanced views, extension to new mission requirements or customer needs, and combinations with other mission content; and
- Federal, state, local, regional and tribal government as well as the general public may equitably leverage the open cloud NGP to search, collaborate, refine, and innovate with USDA data and services.
- Beginning with 2013, the USDA Geospatial Information Officer (GIO) has negotiated annually with the Managing Partner (DOI) a credit for an In-Kind Contribution of the USDA share in lieu of regular partner agency cash contributions to the overall effort. This is true also for the 2015 operating budget.

Benefits.gov:

- Benefits.gov provides a self-service tool for citizens to get information about agency benefit programs, which reduces the need for traditional channels such as call centers and mail;
- Benefits.gov supports USDA's goal to work to reduce food insecurity in America by helping increase public awareness of USDA benefit programs and providing information on how to access safe, affordable and nutritious food;
- USDA features 36 benefit programs on Benefits.gov. The benefits programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Child Nutrition Programs, and the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (provided by the Food and Nutrition Service), Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant programs (provided by the Rural Housing Service), various farm loan and disaster assistance programs (provided through the Farm Service Agency), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives and other conservation programs (provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service) and the Federal crop insurance program (provided by the Risk Management Agency);
- In 2014, USDA added two new programs and received 75 state program updates and 35 federal program updates on Benefits.gov. Thanks to the integration of Google Analytics for website usage measures, and migration to a new system platform, the program can better identify emerging trends and respond accordingly, e.g. news articles, or clarifications to website content;
- In 2014, visitors were kept informed about USDA's benefits as demonstrated by the 2,069,149 page views on its program pages on Benefits.gov;
- In 2014, Benefits.gov transferred 706,809 referrals to USDA's website to obtain information about their specific programs;
- In 2014, there were 2,069,149 page views to USDA's 291 program pages featured on Benefits.gov;
- Benefits.gov used low/no-cost outreach tools such as a quarterly eNewsletter which is emailed to more than 106,000 subscribers, monthly homepage articles, and a Spanish version of the site to inform citizens. USDA was profiled one time in the eNewsletter, increasing visits to USDA's program pages;
- USDA saves an average of \$6.31 per call in call center cost avoidance when citizens obtain information from Benefits.gov; and
- Benefits.gov utilized low/no-cost outreach tools Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to promote awareness and drive traffic to USDA's website. To date, Benefits.gov's Facebook account has over 4,400 "Likes," 17,100+ Twitter followers, and 1,200+ YouTube subscribers.

Grants.gov:

- Grants.gov was created to provide a single website for all federal grant opportunities. It was called for from the President's Management Agenda and as part of Public Law 106-107 to streamline and simplify the grants management process by providing a central online system to find and apply for grants across the federal government;
- Using the Grants.gov system makes it faster, easier and more cost effective for grant applicants to electronically interact with federal grant-making agencies. Key benefits include:
 - Centralizing more than 1,000 different grant programs across all 26 federal grant-making agencies awarding more than \$500 billion annually;
 - Standardizing grant information, application packages and processes for finding and applying for federal grants;

- Streamlining the federal grants process by eliminating the need to navigate complex processes to find and apply for federal grants;
 - Registering once to apply to as many federal agencies and grant programs as needed with just one secure login;
 - Eliminating the need to expend resources, time, postage and reproduction costs associated with traditional paper-based grant applications;
 - Reducing training costs related to learning several different grant application systems and processes;
 - Conducting grant opportunity research with improved search capabilities from a simple key word search to advanced searches over numerous grant opportunity categories, including agency and grant category;
 - Having grant opportunities sent directly to grant applicant desktops through custom search profiles, potential applicants can be notified via email or Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds of future grant opportunities as they are posted by federal agencies;
 - Simplifying the grant application process and reducing paperwork;
 - 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;
 - Facilitating applicant use of electronic grant applications by providing built-in data quality checks, online support functionality and a dedicated customer support team to help complete and submit applications;
 - Validating grant applicants via a five-step registration process;
 - Allowing completion and uploading of grant applications by authenticated and authorized users.
 - Ensuring website stability and security through Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology to encrypt transactional data and communications over the Internet; and
 - Monitoring network traffic to identify unauthorized usage.
- USDA posted 177 funding opportunities and received 8,059 applications in Grants.gov in FY 2014.

Human Resources Line of Business (HR LOB):

- HR's Enterprise Solution delivers a common HR footprint—"One USDA," is a collaborative effort across all USDA sub-agencies, streamlining business processes and capitalizing on software acquisition/modification to support consistent requirements throughout USDA. Under the umbrella of One USDA, the Department has condensed the number of acquisition software used within USDA to one, procured an on-boarding product that capitalizes on one time data entry with integration to personnel processing system, eOPF, and the staffing acquisition tool.

Integrated Award Environment (IAE):

- The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is an E-Government Initiative serving the public and the acquisition and assistance communities in all federal agencies. IAE provides a government-wide business environment unifying, simplifying, and aggregating systems and optimizes resources to deliver services for buyers as well as for vendors and sellers. IAE has freed up agencies to focus on Agency-specific needs while leveraging government-wide shared services. It has enabled transparency of the business processes by sharing data and data sets with the public. USDA uses the initiative's standards and best practices as it continues to enhance its Integrated Acquisition System;
- The IAE offers a portfolio of services which facilitate all phases of the Federal acquisition and assistance life-cycles. IAE includes capabilities for vendors, grantees, and loan recipients to register to do business with the government (System for Award Management (SAM) and Dun and Bradstreet services); vendors to find government opportunities (Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps)); vendors to report sub awards (Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS) / Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Sub award Reporting System (FSRS)); Agencies to report contract actions (Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)); contracting officials to check on past performance, if a party has been excluded from doing business with the Federal Government, and check vendor certifications and representations (Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), and SAM). Together these systems provide unified shared support services to all Federal awards;
- Current IAE efforts include: Obligate and provide funding in the amount determined for that agency's share of the project within the current fiscal year; Assign a senior manager as the key point of contact (POC) and official representative to the IAE PCE and IAE Configuration Control Board (CCB); Support the development and

operation of IAE and the PMO, providing participants in teams as appropriate; Include the Agency's participation in IAE shared services in relevant budget and program documents; and Stay apprised of IAE-related activities and information;

Integrated Award Environment - Loans and Grants:

- This initiative helps USDA meet the requirements of Federal Funding Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA), which requires agencies to provide Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) numbers for the Transparency Act web site. Since all contracts, grants and cooperative agreements already require DUNS numbers, this initiative seeks to leverage the extant system to cover the remainder of Federal grant activity. This allows both the contracts and grants communities to feed information into the FFATA portal -- USAspending.gov. The IAE contract with Dun and Bradstreet was expanded to allow assigning these unique identifiers and to assist Federal financial award reporting;
- USDA participated in the development of the initiative committee's charter and has used the forum to advocate for policy and system changes that will improve transparency and allow for fuller reporting of a class of awards impacted by the DUNS requirement;
- The initiative has also offered a demo of a grants module that could assist agencies in reporting their Federal assistance data. The IAE Grants and Loans committee offers a forum to demonstrate new tools for compliance with reporting requirements and a venue to advise the Council of Federal Assistance Reform which is useful for USDA; and

In FY 2015 there will be significant activity in implementing the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) which amends the FFATA. USDA has been a government leader in, developing, identifying and defining the data elements to be reported on and is a member of all DATA Act working groups working on the Act's implementation.

The following table reflects estimated USDA contributions and funding amounts for 2013 through 2016 to the E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business.

E-Government Initiative¹	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Enacted	2016 Estimate
1. Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$95,000
2. Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan	124,397	136,538	106,069	106,070
3. Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI)	1,152,435	2,124,312	2,004,308	2,084,480
4. E-Rulemaking	860,467	965,000	751,849	486,971
5. E-Training	2,700,000	2,640,000	2,640,000	2,640,000
6. Financial Management Line of Business ²	159,282	167,510	159,282	167,510
7. Geospatial Line of Business	0	0	0	225,000
8. Benefits.gov	324,550	344,222	361,858	388,807
9. Grants.gov	552,402	509,443	439,294	454,039
10. Human Resources Line of Business	260,870	260,870	260,870	260,870
11. Integrated Award Environment	653,660	634,453	634,453	634,453
12. Integrated Award Environment – Loans and Grants	1,285,5700	1,799,269	1,799,269	1,799,269
USDA TOTAL	8,168,633	9,676,617²	9,252,252	9,342,469
<p>¹ USDA participates in and benefits from 24 E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business, but not all initiatives require a financial contribution. The table above provides USDA's actual contributions for 2013 and 2014 and estimated contributions for 2015 and 2016 for only those initiatives that require financial contributions.</p> <p>² The FY 2014 E-Gov portfolio total for actual expenditures is \$26,885 less than the original planned funding total of \$9,703,502, due to unplanned cost reductions in one E-Gov initiative.</p>				