

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 Line of Business (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.
- USDA has more than 4,500 users registered for the MAX Federal Community. 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.
- 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. Benefits.gov is the product of a collaborative partnership of 17 Federal agencies, with the Department of Labor as the managing partner.
- The website provides an eligibility prescreening questionnaire or "Benefit Finder." Answers to the questionnaire are used to evaluate the user's situation and compare it with the eligibility criteria for more than 1,200 Federally-funded benefit and assistance programs. Each program description provides users with the next steps to apply for the benefit program of interest, and the website features a recommendation engine that customizes the user's search for benefits based on their location and interests.
- In 2017, USDA had 306 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on Benefits.gov, including food and nutrition programs administered by State agencies that generated:
 - over 4.2 million Forms of Assistance page views;
 - over 1.0 million transfers from Benefits.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and
 - close to 7 thousand 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 to increase public awareness of USDA food and nutrition benefit programs.

Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP):

- The DAIP mission 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 (FEMA), 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 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 2017, USDA had 20 programs (Forms of Assistance) listed on DisasterAssistance.gov that generated:
 - over 4.3 million Forms of Assistance page views;
 - over 0.8 million transfers from DisasterAssistance.gov to USDA and State agency websites; and
 - over 10 thousand transfers from USDA websites to DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Through DisasterAssistance.gov, USDA provides information on 20 programs related to food assistance, business and farm loans, crop insurance, farm disaster assistance and more. The USDA program

information, as well as other resources provided on DisasterAssistance.gov, helps individuals, families and businesses prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Participation in DisasterAssistance.gov supports USDA's goals of maximizing the ability of American agriculture producers to prosper, and facilitating rural prosperity and economic development.

Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI):

- The eOPF team was minimally successful in migrating the servers from Colorado to Georgia. The addition of an Internet Protocol, IP, Allow List, aka white list, to restrict which computers can access eOPF will greatly reduce the likelihood of additional data breaches. We believe the 'MyCareer' portal, as briefed to the Major Agency Executive Steering Council for HR, could provide great assistance in helping Federal employee self-manage their career; Federal HR subject matter experts should be part of the process to develop its requirements and functionality.

E-Rulemaking:

- USDA's use of the Federal-wide Regulations.gov website and complimentary Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) is 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 not on the public's interaction with Regulations.gov but USDA's own user interaction with FDMS in the management of its rulemaking dockets. In 2017, USDA agencies posted 977 rules, proposed rules, and notice documents to Regulations.gov. USDA posted 104,044 comments from the public in response.

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 replaces 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 2017, the AgLearn program measured an estimated cost avoidance of more than \$22 million. Considering that the AgLearn's budget was about \$5.8 million, this represents an overall USDA return on investment of approximately 286 percent.
- With its substantial buying power, AgLearn was able to negotiate 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 language courses.
- More than 133,000 AgLearn users (including employees, contractors and partners) completed more than one million training events (e.g., online courses, webinars, and classes) during 2017. AgLearn delivered Department-wide Security Awareness, Privacy Basics, PII, and Ethics mandatory trainings. AgLearn has currently more than 15,000 books in the training library, more than 8,000 online courses, and more than 500 videos.
- In 2017, AgLearn continued rolling out leadership competency models and related 360 degree assessments across USDA. This is part of a major program to improve leadership across USDA. In 2017, 2,286 managers and supervisors in USDA received 360 degree assessments.
- AgLearn is in the midst of its most significant modernization effort since 2004. The Next Gen AgLearn project started in 2015 and is expected to provide 1) lower costs, 2) more flexibility, 3) better user engagement, 4) enhanced mobile support, and 5) expanded service options. It is expected to go live in early 2018.

Financial Management LoB (FMLoB):

- In 2017 Momentum shared service organization migrated the Pegasus financial system to a CGI Federal FedRamp Cloud that improved performance, reduced risks and costs, increased flexibility, and improved testing and training for 39 external customers (GSA and 38 small boards and commissions). This cloud

environment also ensures that USDA shared service customers will continue to have a robust, and reliable platform to focus on their core mission.

- USDA continues to chair the Systems Applications and Products (SAP) Customer Control Board to exchange information and ensure that future product releases and enhancements are aligned with Federal standards.
- FMLoB provides 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.
- The USDA Grants Management and Federal Financial Assistance solution, ezFedGrants, is integrated with Grants.gov to continue allowing the streamlined and transparent process between grant administrators and recipients.

FOIA Portal:

- The Freedom of Information Improvement Act of 2016 requires implementation of a new consolidated online request portal by the Director of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in consultation with the Attorney General that allows the public to submit a request to any agency from a single website. Agencies may still create or maintain independent online portals for the submission of requests so long as they ensure interoperability between the consolidated portal and agency case management systems.

Geospatial LoB:

- Established the Enterprise Geospatial Management Office (EGMO) 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.
 - The EGMO team held department-wide, 3 day workshops in June and October 2017 to develop a thorough understanding of the geospatial enterprise across the depth and breadth of USDA. The attendees at the workshop shared concerns, data issues and best practices. A robust list of focus items and action items was developed through the course of each meeting. Deliverables from the June meeting were completed, and October items will be addressed one-by-one in the coming months by the EGMO Program Manager, the Geospatial Advisory Committee, and geospatial subject matter experts from across USDA.
- USDA is standing up a department level Geospatial Advisory Committee to support the USDA EGMO by providing technical assistance, coordination, and guidance. The GAC is a formal advisory group to the EGMO with membership that represents in-depth knowledge of geospatial technology and how it applies to program requirements within their agency, and can provide the expertise and perspective to support better coordination and collaboration between agencies in the Department.
 - The objectives of the GAC are to:
 - Share ideas and best practices for building geospatial data assets and tools to support USDA and agency missions;
 - Support development of capabilities to share USDA geospatial information with external partners and the public;
 - Support strategic planning initiatives for EGMO; and
 - Collaborate with related USDA working groups and initiatives.
- The USDA has a close relationship with the Civil Applications Committee (CAC). The CAC is an interagency committee that coordinates and oversees the Federal civil use of classified collections. The CAC supports traditional mapping applications as well as a broad range of environmental and remote sensing applications central to Federal agency missions. Examples include monitoring volcanoes; detecting wildland fires; coordinating emergency response to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. Through the CAC, the Forest Service has leveraged national systems to support wildland fire operations and is a critical part of fire mapping capabilities during active wildfire incidents.
 - In 2017, the CAC created a vice chair position, now occupied by the Director of OHSEC (acting). This position, along with the USDA Representative, who is a voting member of the CAC, will broaden utility of National Systems to support USDA agency mission needs.

Grants.gov:

- Grants.gov provides a common website for federal agencies to post discretionary funding opportunities and for grantees to find and apply to them. Using the Grants.gov system makes it faster, easier and more cost effective for grant applicants to electronically interact with federal grant-making agencies. In FY 2017, USDA posted 177 funding opportunities and received 7,324 applications.
- Previously, grant processes varied widely among agencies and programs. This resulted in a complicated, burdensome, and costly process to find grants. Mandated by Public Law 106-107 and the 2002 President's Management Agenda, Grants.gov transformed the federal grants environment by streamlining and standardizing public-facing grant processes. Grants.gov eliminated redundancies and now provides a simplified and improved process for both applicants and grantors. It centralized more than 1,000 different grant programs across federal grant-making agencies awarding more than \$500 billion annually, and standardized grant information, application packages and processes for finding and applying for federal grants.
- Benefits derived from these enhancements include, among others:
 - Simplifying the grant application process to save applicants costs, time and hassle:
 - 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.
 - Making it easier to research and find federal grant opportunities:
 - 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 RSS feeds of future grant opportunities as they are posted by federal agencies.
 - Making electronic grant application processing easier:
 - 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.
 - Providing a secure and reliable source to apply for federal grants.
 - 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.
 - Monitoring network traffic to identify unauthorized usage.

Human Resources Line of Business:

- The release of the significantly revamped 3rd iteration of the business Reference Model (BRM 3.0) provides a better overview of the roles and responsibilities of OPM and Federal agencies in the various functions of the human capital lifecycle. While efforts are underway to improve the data model, all of the enterprise architecture models (data, performance, service component, and technical) need to be updated to reflect the changes in the BRM.

Integrated Award Environment (IAE):

- In 2017, Federal Agencies implemented the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) which amends the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act.

- USDA continued implementation of the DATA Act by creating Standard Operating Procedures and holding multiple training sessions to address reporting requirements;
- USDA continued to improve and refine the DATA Act repository with additional automation and record validation; and OCFO met the May 2017 DATA Act implementation date and has successfully reported 3 quarters worth of data.

The following table reflects estimated USDA contributions and funding amounts for 2016 through 2019 to the E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business.

E-Government Initiative¹ (Dollars in Thousands)	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Estimated	2019 President's Budget
1. Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000
2. Benefits.gov	388,807	402,698	413,036	418,503
3. Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan	106,070	106,070	106,070	106,070
4. Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI)	1,860,138	1,860,138	1,860,138	1,860,138
5. E-Rulemaking	486,971	564,025	699,805	580,067
6. E-Training ³	2,640,000	-	-	-
7. Financial Management Line of Business	167,510	167,510	167,510	167,510
8. Freedom of Information Act Portal ²	-	-	-	42,000
9. Geospatial Line of Business	225,000	225,000	225,000	225,000
10. Grants.gov	454,039	516,493	493,961	473,087
11. Human Resources Line of Business	260,870	260,870	273,913	273,913
12. Integrated Award Environment ⁴	2,433,722	3,674,931	3,748,430	4,048,189
USDA TOTAL	9,133,127	7,887,735	8,097,863	8,304,477

¹ USDA participates in and benefits from 17 E-Government Initiatives and Lines of Business, but not all initiatives require a financial contribution. The table above provides USDA's actual contributions for 2016 and 2017 and estimated contributions for 2018 and 2019 for only those initiatives that require financial contributions.

² For FY2019, USDA should plan for a contribution of \$42,000 to support the continued operations and maintenance of the ongoing consolidated FOIA.gov Request Portal, as required by the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016.

³ In 2017, E-Training was transferred to the Working Capital Fund and will no longer be an E-Government Initiative that is funded through Greenbook.

⁴ In 2016, Integrated Award Environment IAE and Integrated Award Environment were combined into a single activity.