

## 2027 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

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**PREFACE**

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2027 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2024 and 2025, Working Families Tax Cut Act, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026, and the President's Budget request for 2027. Amounts for 2026 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the Working Families Tax Cut Act is used to refer to the Public Law 119-21.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of small non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1). Due to rounding, some tables may not sum exactly.

**AGENCY-WIDE****PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) advances USDA's Civil Rights mission through four strategic priorities set by the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, ensuring enforcement that is rigorous and responsive. OCR combats unlawful discrimination by eliminating race-based, sex-based, and other prohibited preferences, investigating discriminatory programs, and upholding color blind, merit-based standards in hiring and contracting. It protects women and children by enforcing federal policies on biological sex classifications, maintains single sex facilities where appropriate, and safeguarding access to sex specific opportunities. OCR defends religious freedom by addressing allegations of discrimination, combating anti-Christian bias and antisemitism, and ensuring USDA policies respect First Amendment rights and conscience protections. Finally, OCR promotes an America First principle by aligning civil rights enforcement with USDA's mission to serve American agriculture and rural communities, emphasizing service to citizens and producers, compliance with law, and support for the Secretary's Farmers First agenda.

At OCR, the strategic priorities guide the execution of our statutory responsibilities with a commitment to excellence. These responsibilities, established under 7 CFR § 2.25, encompass operational support functions and transformation efforts, the processing of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint, the handling of program complaints, the administration of Alternative Dispute Resolution for both EEO and program conflicts, the compliance of program and employment activities, mandatory reporting, policy development, review and oversight, and civil rights impact and data analysis. In recent years, many of these statutory duties were not given the sustained attention they require, leaving OCR and the broader civil rights framework in need of organizational renewal. Now, efforts focus on strengthening processes, improving data integrity, ensuring complaint handling and enforcement are rigorous and efficient. This includes holding recipients, including universities and other partners, accountable for legal obligations, rebuilding trust, preventing backlogs, and ensuring that civil rights enforcement fully supports USDA's mission of serving American agriculture and rural communities.

As of September 30, 2025, OCR had 148 staff (109 in Washington, DC, and 39 in field locations). OCR will undergo significant organizational restructuring to ensure strategic and operational oversight of all civil rights responsibilities for USDA-wide.

**OIG AND GAO REPORTS**

**Table OCR-1. Closed, Implemented GAO Reports**

ID	Date Opened	Date Closed	Title	Result
GAO-24-106791	11/02/2023	06/30/2025	Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO): Additional Actions Would Improve USDA's Collection and Reporting of Key Data	Rec. 2 – Updated disclaimer was added to No Fear Act Report. Rec. 3, 4 and 6 – The EEO data reconciliation finalized.

**AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES**

**Table OCR-2. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	
Office of Civil Rights:									
Salaries and Expenses.....	\$37,000	149	\$37,000	148	\$30,000	100	\$14,992	100	
Total Available .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	
Total Obligations .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	
Total Obligations, OCR .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	
Other USDA:									
OCFO, NEF Funding .....	460	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ASCR, Detailed Assignment.....	-	-	83	-	-	-	-	-	
Total, Other USDA .....	460	-	83	-	-	-	-	-	
Total, Agriculture Available ..	37,460	149	37,083	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	
Other Federal Funds:									
DOI .....	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total, Other Federal .....	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Available, OCR.....	37,468	149	37,083	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	

**PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES**

**Table OCR-3. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	2024			2025			2026			2027		
	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total
SES.....	1	-	1	4	-	4	4	4	4	4	-	4
GS-15.....	10	3	13	11	2	13	7	2	9	7	2	9
GS-14.....	14	6	20	15	6	21	8	6	14	8	6	14
GS-13.....	38	16	54	37	19	56	26	17	43	26	17	43
GS-12.....	18	9	27	18	9	27	11	4	15	11	4	15
GS-11.....	10	-	10	1	1	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-9 .....	11	-	11	10	1	11	6	1	7	6	1	7
GS-8 .....	9	-	9	9	1	10	6	-	6	6	-	6
GS-7 .....	2	-	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-6 .....	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-3 .....	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent	115	34	149	109	39	148	70	30	100	70	30	100
Total Perm. FT EOY	115	34	149	109	39	148	70	30	100	70	30	100
FTE .....	115	34	149	109	39	148	70	29	100	70	29	100

**SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS**

**Table OCR-4. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)**

Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
<b>Working Capital Fund:</b>				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA Contact Center .....	\$15	\$15	-	-
General Counsel Legal Compliance .....	-	3	\$40	\$40
Human Resources Enterprise System Management ..	4	5	12	12
Integrated Procurement Systems .....	50	47	54	54
Mail and Reproduction Management Division .....	524	456	328	331
Material Management Service Center .....	20	19	28	28
Personnel and Document Security Program .....	6	7	8	0
Procurement Operations Division .....	-	-	162	162
Subtotal .....	619	552	632	627
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center .....	46	1	11	11
Finance and Management: .....				
Internal Control Support Services .....	13	11	1	1
Financial Shared Services .....	49	44	34	34
National Finance Center .....	40	43	40	40
Subtotal .....	102	98	75	75
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center .....	1,024	987	688	687
Department Admin Information Technology Office ...	507	506	397	-
Digital Infrastructure Services Center .....	621	481	1,219	1,611
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services .....	80	108	94	94
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services .....	482	492	623	624
Enterprise Network Services .....	120	101	34	34
Subtotal .....	2,834	2,675	3,055	3,050
Correspondence Management Services:				
Office of the Executive Secretariat .....	66	47	38	38
Total, Working Capital Fund .....	3,667	3,373	3,811	3,801
<b>Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:</b>				
Agency Partnership Outreach .....	12	10	6	6
America’s Agricultural Heritage .....	-	-	1	1
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility .....	4	1	-	-
Employee Experience .....	6	4	-	-
Medical Services .....	42	-	-	-
NCR Interpreting Services .....	19	13	20	20
OCFO Shared Services Branch .....	-	-	1	2
Office of Customer Experience .....	5	2	-	-
Physical Security .....	7	8	4	4
Security Detail .....	8	11	25	25
Security Operations .....	12	9	11	11
Talent Group .....	5	4	1	-
TARGET Center .....	3	2	2	2
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	123	64	71	71
Agency Total .....	3,790	3,437	3,882	3,872

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**ACCOUNT 1: OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS**

**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

*Office of Civil Rights*

For necessary expenses of the Office of Civil Rights, [~~\$30,000,000~~]\$14,992,000.

**LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT**

**Table OCR-5. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (in dollars)**

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2026 .....	\$30,000,000
Change in Appropriation .....	<u>-15,008,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2027 .....	<u>14,992,000</u>

**PROJECT STATEMENTS**

**Table OCR-6. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)<sup>1</sup>**

Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Chg. Dec. Key					
Discretionary Approp:											
Office of Civil Rights .....	\$37,000	149	\$37,000	148	\$30,000	100	\$14,992	100	-\$15,008	-	(1)
Total Appropriation .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-	
Total Available .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-	
Total Obligations .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-	

**Table OCR-7. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)<sup>2</sup>**

Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.				
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Civil Rights .....	\$37,000	149	\$37,000	148	\$30,000	100	\$14,992	100	-\$15,008	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations..	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-
Total Obligations .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-
Total Available	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-
Total Appropriation .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100	-15,008	-

**JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES**

The base funding allocated to OCR continues to sustain Department-wide endeavors, encompassing the facilitation of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, the formulation of equal opportunity policies, the enforcement of civil rights, the orchestration of comprehensive analyses and adjudications, the provision of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and meticulous adherence to compliance standards. OCR's purview encompasses providing services to all USDA agencies, undertaking Equal Employment Opportunity investigations, issuing final agency decisions, and managing conflict of interest cases. In accordance with administration policy announced in the Budget, OCR will follow new government-wide grants guidance prohibiting the use of Federal funds to pay for subscriptions to academic journals, as well as for the publication of research results that are not specifically required by Federal statute or approved in advance by a Federal agency. This policy preserves funds to support actual research by ensuring that the American taxpayer does not pay for

<sup>1</sup> This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

<sup>2</sup> This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

the research, publication, and access to that research, essentially triple-charging the public for the same product.

- 1) A decrease of \$15,008,000 for the Office of Civil Rights (\$30,000,000 and 100 FTEs available in 2026).
  - a) This reduction will enable OCR to streamline policies, eliminate redundancies, and strengthen skill alignment, focusing resources on civil rights functions. This approach supports operational efficiency, agility, and sustained compliance while adapting to evolving policy requirements.
  - b) The decrease in funds of \$8,000 for National Security Related Expenses, being realigned to the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), will enhance efficiency and effectiveness within USDA. This strategic realignment will centralize resources under OHS, which provides leadership in national security through policy development, emergency preparedness and response initiatives, and threat mitigation coordination. Consolidating the budget under OHS eliminates redundancies, ensures more coordinated resource allocation, and improves the execution of departmental security policies, ultimately bolstering the USDA's resilience and readiness without compromising overall security.

**GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**

**Table OCR-8. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Civil Rights (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

State/Territory/Country	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Alabama .....	\$497	2	\$500	2	\$300	1	\$150	1
Arizona .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
California .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
Delaware .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
District of Columbia .....	16,389	66	26,250	105	21,300	71	10,642	71
Florida .....	993	4	1,000	4	1,200	4	600	4
Georgia.....	745	3	750	3	600	2	300	2
Illinois .....	497	2	500	2	300	1	150	1
Kansas.....	248	1	250	1	-	-	-	-
Kentucky .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
Maryland.....	9,685	39	1,250	5	300	1	150	1
Mississippi.....	497	2	500	2	600	2	300	2
Missouri .....	248	1	250	1	-	-	-	-
Nevada .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
New Jersey.....	497	2	500	2	300	1	150	1
New York .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
North Carolina .....	497	2	500	2	300	1	150	1
Ohio .....	497	2	500	2	600	2	300	2
Pennsylvania .....	248	1	250	1	-	-	-	-
Texas .....	1,987	8	2,000	8	1,500	5	750	5
Utah .....	248	1	250	1	300	1	150	1
Virginia .....	1,738	7	250	1	600	2	300	2
Obligations .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100
Total, Available .....	37,000	149	37,000	148	30,000	100	14,992	100

**OBJECT CLASSIFICATION**

**Table OCR-9. Classification by Objects – Discretionary Funding (thousands of dollars) <sup>3</sup>**

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
<b>Personnel Compensation:</b>					
	Washington D.C. ....	\$13,179	\$14,921	\$8,114	\$5,024
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	4,806	4,890	4,000	2,250
11	Total personnel compensation.....	17,985	19,811	12,114	7,274
12	Personal benefits.....	6,781	7,000	6,525	3,263
13.0	Benefits for former personnel .....	11	11	11	6
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits .....	24,777	26,822	18,650	10,543
<b>Other Objects:</b>					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons .....	178	4	1,525	-
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges ...	542	501	501	271
24.0	Printing and reproduction .....	30	5	5	5
25.1	Advisory and assistance services.....	1,644	2,319	1,721	1,257
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	293	143	250	81
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	16	15	20	-
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities .....	7,572	5,646	5,522	2,074
25.5	Research and development contracts.....	321	300	300	150
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment .....	1,409	1,095	1,181	596
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	65	25	25	-
31.0	Equipment .....	3	-	-	-
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities .....	150	125	300	15
	Total, Other Objects .....	12,223	10,178	11,350	4,457
99.9	Total, new obligations .....	37,000	37,000	30,000	14,992
	<b>DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3) .....</b>	\$11	\$11	\$11	\$11
<b>Position Data:</b>					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position .....	\$221,900	\$219,996	\$219,996	\$219,996
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$133,692	\$127,447	\$127,447	\$127,447
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.5	13.3	13.3	13.3

<sup>3</sup> This table does not match MAX Schedule O due to reimbursables.

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**STATUS OF PROGRAMS**

The Office of Civil Rights is responsible for fulfilling USDA’s statutory civil right obligations, including complaint processing, compliance oversight, and enforcement under Title VI and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act. These functions are not optional; they are mandated by law, regulation, and executive order. Yet under the last administration, these critical responsibilities were de-emphasized. Timeliness was enforced, but at the expense of quality, substance, and accountability, leaving UYSDA vulnerable to compliance failures, weakened protections, and diminished public trust.

Currently, OCR faces acute structural, operational, and leadership deficiencies that jeopardize mission integrity. Technical capacity has eroded due to flawed hiring practices that have lowered professional standards and compromised subject matter expertise. Leadership oversight has been reduced during prolonged telework periods, leading to decreased accountability and operational discipline. Ongoing issues with data integrity impede efforts in complaint tracking, performance monitoring, and strategic decision-making. Organizational misalignment has led to inefficiencies and supervisory ambiguity, while performance management has suffered from delayed standards and the absence of appraisals. Complaint processing experiences inconsistency due to varying protocols and insufficient quality assurance measures. Additionally, staff misallocations, particularly overreliance on contractors, have impeded the restoration of essential civil rights expertise necessary for statutory functions.

To stabilize operations and restore compliance, USDA is implementing corrective actions aligned with its reorganization strategy. Personnel are being realigned to core complaint processing functions, leadership is being reinforced in program complaints, and employment complaints units are undergoing structural adjustments to reduce duplication and strengthen oversight. A joint OASCR/Mission Area audit is addressing persistent data integrity issues, while standardized intake and counseling procedures are being introduced to ensure consistency and elevate service quality. Most importantly, USDA will increase the use of compliance tools to ensure that recipients of federal funding, including those covered by Title VI and Title IX, follow the law. These measures will prevent the illegal behaviors and actions tolerated in the past from continuing and will reestablish civil rights enforcement as a point of excellence within USDA.

**Selected Examples of Recent Progress**

**EEO Program** – The number of EEO complaints filed decreased from 358 in 2024 to 327 in 2025. The average number of days to conduct an EEO investigation increased from 126 to 167 but remained below the 180-day regulatory requirement.

***Table OCR-10. Formal EEO Complaints (thousands of dollars)***

<b>FORMAL EEO COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2026 Estimate</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
Number of Formal EEO Complaints.....	358	327	400	400
Number of Amendments.....	141	92	100	100
Number of Appeals.....	122	72	75	75
Average Days: Investigation .....	126	167	180	180
Average Days: Adjudication .....	37	50	80	80

**Conflict Complaint - EEO Program** – The number of EEO complaints increased from 58 in 2024 to 68 in 2025. The average time for EEO investigations of non-amended complaints is 20 days, which is within the regulatory timeframe.

**Table OCR-11. Conflict Complaints (thousands of dollars)**

<b>INFORMAL EEO COMPLAINTS FILED</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2026 Estimate</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
Number of Complaints .....	58	68	100	100
Counseling within 30 days .....	11	42	60	60
Counseling within 90 days where the individual participated in ADR .....	15	34	50	50
Counseling within 31-90 days that was untimely..	1	3	1	1

**Table OCR-12. Conflict Complaints (thousands of dollars)**

<b>FORMAL EEO COMPLAINTS FILED</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>	<b>2026 Estimate</b>	<b>2027 Estimate</b>
Number of Complaints.....	41	50	100	100
Number of complaints via investigation: within 180 days regulatory timeframe (Investigations) .....	26	20	40	40
Average Number of days for processing complaints through investigation.....	154	224	180	180