

United States Department of Agriculture

Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy Framework

Aligning FY21-22 Agency HBCU Competitiveness Plans with FY18-22 Agency Strategic Plans

(FY20 Update)



Prepared by

The Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

The USDA FY2018-2022 Strategic Plan is made up of seven strategic goals, which will guide us as we work to support American farmers, ranchers, foresters, producers, and consumers in the years to come. This Plan serves as a roadmap for everything the USDA does to remain accountable to each other and to the people who rely on us across the country.

First and foremost, we work to prioritize customer service every day for our customers. Our customers expect and have every right to demand their Government to conduct the people's business efficiently, effectively, and with the utmost integrity.

We promote the ability of America's agricultural sector to produce and sell the food and fiber that feeds and clothes the world and to reap the earned reward of their labor. By promoting American agricultural products, we work to remove obstacles and give farmers, ranchers, foresters, and producers every opportunity to prosper and thrive. Here at USDA, we will facilitate rural prosperity through the expansion of rural business opportunities, access to capital, improved infrastructure, and support for workforce development.

We also work to preserve the land. Stewardship is not optional for farmers and ranchers. American agriculture's bounty comes directly from the natural resources used to produce food and fiber. Today, America's natural resources sustain more than 320 million Americans and countless others around the globe. We work to manage the natural resources entrusted directly to the Department including our National Forests with a sharp focus on the sustainable use of these resources. Lastly, the USDA will continue to ensure that all Americans have access to a safe and secure food supply.

Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy Framework

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Federal Agency Name: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Agency Mission

Statement defining the fundamental purpose of the agency. Answer the question, "Why does the agency exist?"

Provide leadership on agriculture, food, natural resources, rural infrastructure, nutrition, and related issues through fact-based, data-driven, and customer-focused decisions.

Agency Goal(s)

Provide not more than five (5) agency goals excerpted from the FY18-22 agency strategic plan. Identified agency goal(s) should be informed by broad areas of opportunity in which higher education institutions currently deliver or can deliver value to the agency.

Agency Goal 1: Ensure USDA Programs Are Delivered Efficiently, Effectively, With Integrity and a Focus on Customer Service

Agency Goal 2: Maximize the Ability of American Agricultural Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World

Agency Goal 3: Promote American Agricultural Products and Exports

Agency Goal 4: Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development

Agency Goal 5: Strengthen the Stewardship of Private Lands Through Technology and Research

HBCU Goal(s)

Provide not more than five (5) HBCU goals linked to agency goal(s) excerpted from the FY18-22 agency strategic plan. Identified HBCU goal(s) should be informed by broad areas of opportunity in which higher education institutions currently deliver or can deliver value to the agency.

HBCU Goal 1: USDA will broaden its outreach to the HBCUs to increase equal access and opportunities to USDA programs and services

HBCU Goal 2: USDA will partner with the 1890 Land-Grant Universities to better serve the communities with a focus on the disadvantaged, limited resource and under-served rural residents

HBCU Goal 3: USDA will attract more students into careers in food science, agricultural science, natural resources and related fields

Connection to Framework Priority Areas (Education · 21st Century Infrastructure · Economic Development and Competitiveness · Academic Research Enterprise · Supplemental Opportunities – for descriptions, see pages 20-21 of the Agency Guidance and Reference Brief).

Connect each identified HBCU goal to one or more Framework priority areas.

HBCU Goal 1 – Priority Area(s):

Animal Plant Health Inspection Service – (APHIS) - The USDA-APHIS AgDiscovery Program is a summer outreach program designed to help teenagers explore careers in plant and animal science, wildlife management, and agribusiness. This program allows students to live on a college campus and learn about agriculture from university professors, scientists, and administrative professionals who work in the U.S. Government in a variety of fields. In FY 20, USDA-APHIS sponsored programs at the following HBCUs:

Alcorn State University**

Coppin State University**

Delaware State University*

Florida A&M University*

Kentucky State University*

Lincoln University-Missouri*

Prairie View A&M University**

Tuskegee University**

University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff*

University of Maryland-Eastern Shore*

University of the Virgin Islands**

Virginia State University**

Agricultural Research Service – (ARS) - Increase scientific collaboration between ARS and HBCUs

Foreign Agricultural Services – (FAS) - FAS grants and agreements are competitive, and all institutions of higher education may compete.

However, throughout the year, FAS may announce opportunities under the following programs to which HBCUs may apply:

Fellowship/Exchange; Borlaug Fellowship Program; Cochran Fellowship Program; Embassy Science Fellows Program; Faculty Exchange Program;

International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program; Scientific Cooperation Exchange Program (China); Scientific Cooperation Research Program; and Scientific Exchanges Program. Information on these programs can be found at: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs>.

Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area – (FPAC) mission area includes Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA) and FPAC Business Center - In FY 2020, FPAC's goal was to maintain a strong presence and be actively involved with the mission area's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) partnerships, particularly the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and 1890s Scholars Program. The 1890 institutions offer degree programs that the FPAC Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) seek when recruiting students with a conservation background (e.g., plant and soil science, agronomy, natural resources management and civil and agricultural engineering).

FPAC - FSA - In partnership with these 1890 historically black land-grant colleges and universities, FSA works to establish opportunities that ensure equitable participation in USDA programs, services, and resources for rural, tribal, and historically underserved students and the communities they serve. Additionally, these partnerships support capacity building initiatives that bolster education and career opportunities for students and faculty and help develop a strong pipeline of talent for FSA.

FPAC - NRCS - NRCS has partnered with Tennessee State University (TSU) to prepare an Integrated Education and Demonstration Conservation site on the property of TSU for the advancement of student learning and preparation for the future Agriculture and STEM workforce.

This Integrated Education and Demonstration Conservation site will assist in enhance meaningful learning of the students by providing them with an immersive environment to explore concepts of land planning, land preparation, land use efficiency, and land conservation principles. This Integrated Education and Demonstration Conservation Site will assist in 1) Enhancing Student Awareness, 2) Advancing Student Engagement; 3) Propagating Student Project/Problem Based Learning; and 4) Establishing Student Experiential Learning Opportunities.

Creating an Integrated Education and Demonstration Conservation site on the property of Tennessee State University will provide a unique research and education platform for students and serve as a resource for providing technical assistance, demonstrations and training to landowners regarding ways to: 1) conserve natural resources, 2) adopt best practices for land preservation, 3) implement strategies for floodway and flood plains mitigation; and 4)safely advance economic growth and development. Under this agreement a comprehensive approach to provide a demonstration venue for teaching students and community stakeholders best practices and core principles of conservation.

Tuskegee University has assisted and served as a champion for USDA/NRCS to solidify the understanding and address Sustainable Agriculture which includes production with the intent of satisfying human food, fuel, and fiber needs; the enhancement of environmental quality as well as the natural resource base, efficient use of non-renewable and on-farm renewable resources, profitability of farm operations, and social aspects, including the quality of life. An alternative way in which to understand sustainable agriculture is from a holistic science perspective in which production is ecologically sound, economically profitable, socially just, and culturally appropriate. This approach to agriculture requires cooperation at various levels between farmers, universities, government agencies, communities, and businesses working together in new ways to address issues of agriculture with a global perspective.

Alcorn State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Tennessee State University (TSU)

This is a tri-university agreement of which the overall benefit will be the anticipated increase in the participation of historically underserved producers in USDA programs, but it could increase the participation rate with other groups of producers as well. Another anticipated benefit will be the reduction of the impact of the five risk forming factors associated with production agriculture. The direct benefits are expected at the farm level where improved management of natural resources should occur by adopting the appropriate conservation systems for the resource concerns, identified on the farm. By improving conservation planning for agriculture based on local conditions experience by the producers, NRCS will help to increase both the resiliency and sustainability of the farm during times when challenges continue to mount for historically underserved producers.

The project has a very high transferability to other states that have a HBCU that has an Extension Outreach education program for agriculture. The benefits are expected to be noticed by multiple USDA agencies as the producers began becoming more familiar with all programs that USDA offers. The initiation of a producer-led effort via HBCUs could catalyze greater adoption of conservation practices that promote soil health, water quality/quantity and greater farm resilience in a changing climate. Producer to producer education is perhaps the most effective way to increase adoption.

FPAC – Business Center - In FY 2020, FPAC's goal was to maintain a strong presence and be actively involved with the mission area's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) partnerships, particularly the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and 1890s Scholars Program. The 1890 institutions offer degree programs that the FPAC Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) seek when recruiting students with a conservation background (e.g., plant and soil science, agronomy, natural resources management and civil and agricultural engineering). The FPAC HBCU partnerships are administered by the FPAC Business Center Human Resources Division (HRD).

Food Safety Inspection Service – (FSIS) - PHV Retention Incentives, Established FY20. Market this program to HBCUs with Veterinary or Animal science schools.

Forest Service – (FS) - Administer USDA Scholarship/Internship Programs: The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program is implemented under the USDA Fellows Experience Program (FEP). Scholars accepted into the program will be appointed using the Schedule A(r) authority (5 CFR 213.3202) and are not eligible for noncompetitive conversion to full time employment upon graduation.

National Agricultural Statistics Service – (NASS) – Provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

NASS is the premier source of comprehensive agricultural data that providers and users trust to meet their changing needs and interests, and to make well-informed decisions. NASS looks to expand the program to qualify students to become agriculture statistician at Southern University to include various HBCUs.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – (NIFA) - Advance cultural diversity of the food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce by attracting and educating more students from underrepresented groups.

Rural Development – (RD) - Extend outreach to HBCU Organizations to broaden awareness to RD Job opportunities.

HBCU Goal 2 – Priority Area(s):

APHIS - Florida A&M Vet Tech Program and Fort Valley State University – These partnerships are a part of capacity building. APHIS and other health organizations continue to need trained professionals to maintain healthy animals in order to aid in protecting the health, safety and welfare of animals and humans.

ARS - Facilitate Collaboration between HBCUs and NAL to identify potential academic partnerships

FAS - During FY 2021 and FY 2022, FAS will continue to support the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program and host four USDA/1890 National Scholars to increase minorities studying and working in international agriculture. FAS current 1890 Scholars are attending: Langston University; Prairie View A&M University; Alcorn State University, and Arkansas University of Pine Bluff.

FPAC - FSA - USDA has an MOU with the Council of 1890 universities which has been the focus of our agencies' outreach efforts. The FPAC agencies (FSA, NRCS and RMA) partner with these 19 1890s that are also HBCUs. These institutions strengthen research, extension and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences, and attract students into careers in agriculture, food, natural resources, and human sciences – which align with the goals and mission of the FPAC agencies. Each 1890 university has USDA liaisons on every campus who assist students in applying for USDA career programs. They also work with the university's agricultural extension program to promote USDA programs to the farmers and ranchers in that state

FPAC - NRCS - In FY 2020, FPAC's goal was to maintain a strong presence and be actively involved with the mission area's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) partnerships, particularly the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and 1890s Scholars Program. The 1890 institutions offer degree programs that the FPAC Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) seek when recruiting students with a conservation background (e.g., plant and soil science, agronomy, natural resources management and civil and agricultural engineering). These FPAC HBCU partnerships are administered by FPAC Business Center Human Resources Division (HRD).

FSIS - Outreach to colleges and universities with veterinary, food, and animal science programs to educate students about the FSIS mission as well as to promote FSIS as an employer of choice.

FS - Focus on mission critical occupations. The Equal Employment Opportunity Management Directives-715 (MD715) and Student Program workforce analysis is an effective tool to identify agency-specific mission critical occupations (MCO) at the greatest risk, and to provides an opportunity to implement strategies to close the gaps with workforce succession planning, supports the elimination of **employment barriers**, and enhances diverse and inclusive opportunities in the agency. These programs promote long term leadership continuity and the continual development of the highly talented and skilled employees within the Forest Service.

NASS - Enhance the CBO relationship to strengthen connections to the voice of the customers with a focus on the underserved communities to encourage the completion of NASS surveys.

NIFA - Advance the intended use of NIFA's 1890 Facilities Grants for the acquisition and improvement of agricultural and food sciences facilities and equipment, including libraries., to enable American Agricultural Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World

The Facilities Grant Program is intended to help enhance the capacity of the 1890 Institutions through the acquisition and improvement of agricultural and food sciences facilities and equipment, including libraries and information technologies, so that they may participate fully in the nation's education, research and extension.

RD - Recruit and Hire two 1890 National Scholar students.

HBCU Goal 3 – Priority Area(s):

APHIS continues to have long-standing partnership with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that have a strong presence in the HBCU Community. APHIS collaborates with these organizations by speaking at conferences, sharing information on agency services, job announcements and important information from the Department.

ARS - Encourage HBCU support of ARS programs by amplifying messaging about the impact of ARS in food and agriculture

FAS - Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Interns.

FPAC – FSA - FSA State Executive Director (SEDs), who have an 1890 University in their state, are provided with an 1890s toolkit upon taking office (every four years) and asked to meet with the university's president, along with the USDA Liaison and State Outreach Coordinator, to discuss how the agency can partner with the university to help educate farmers, ranchers and recruiting opportunities for the students.

FPAC - NRCS - The FPAC National Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) provide national program leadership and guidance for FPAC-wide activities related to 1) outreach, 2) diversity and inclusion, 3) training, 4) equal employment and retention strategies, and 5) internal and external partnerships. They also provide operational guidance and support to state and regional collateral BEPMs.

FSIS - The Veterinary Medical Officer Outreach Coordinator position to promote the adoption of innovative measures to increase the attractiveness of the Agency as an employer and promote the Agency and its food safety mission to professional groups and academic institutions.

FS - Supporting strategy and tactics to improve Federal agency HBCU competitiveness processes, activities, opportunity exploration and sustained implementation of the National Partnership Outreach and Capacity Building Program (POCB). The POCB program facilitates collaboration and outreach to overcome the effects of historic discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand the capacity of land

grant colleges and universities to: provide education; ensure that diverse public perspectives are included in agency decisions and activities; provide student work experience and internships; support academic curriculum; improve the diversity representation and skill development of the federal workforce; advocate the resolution of underserved community/protected groups issues and provide technical assistance and information. These programs support the specific competencies desired for the organization; identifies all key positions in the agency and the specific competencies for these key positions; identifies potential future candidates from within the agency and profiles of future candidates, recruits; and provides development opportunities.

NASS - Encourage Presence State Statisticians to serve as a liaison to the agricultural community with an increase focus on HCBUs.

RD - Ensure RD is marketing to HCBUs to fill Pathways positions.

HBCU Goal 4 – Priority Area(s):

APHIS continues its outreach initiative with HCBUs and is looking forward to expanding its network in FYs 21 and 22.

ARS - Serve as a part of the ARS scientific network for research data transfers (SciNet)

FPAC - FSA - USDA has an MOU with 1890s and the three (3) Centers of Excellence designed to enhance the relationship between the universities and USDA to creatively look for ways to help solve many of the issues plaguing the food and agricultural industry. FSA and NRCS partnered with seven (7) of the 1890s on supporting the Center for Innovative and Sustainable Small Farms, Ranches and Forest Lands.

FPAC - NRCS - NRCS has three (3) cooperative agreements in place to bolster and maintain a pipeline of Civil Engineers and Agricultural/Biological Engineers – establish a diverse and qualified pool of candidates for internships and career appointments. NRCS is looking into expanding these opportunities to other HCBUs offering these type of engineering programs.

NASS - To Inform researchers of all NASS data that are available to the public by connecting with other Statistical/Survey Organizations for brainstorming, lessons learned and information sharing with a focus on HCBUs

NIFA - Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development

In support of the tripartite land grant mission, there will be increased focus on outreach to underserved communities in some of the programs in the 1890 Portfolio. This will include funding to assist with creation of jobs, training and retraining of workers, and helping communities impacted by COVID-19. For example, the newly funded 1890 Centers of Excellence at 1890 (1890 COEs)

- 1) increasing profitability and rural prosperity in underserved farming communities
- 2) addressing critical needs for enhanced international training and development; and
- 3) increasing diversity in the science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAM) pipeline.

In addition, the 1890 Extension Formula grants assist diverse audiences, particularly those with have limited social and economic resources, to improve their access to real opportunities through outreach education. The funds provide valuable, research-based educational opportunities that respond to the changing needs of limited-resource clients. The funds support farmers of small and medium-size family farms and new producers in owning and operating viable businesses; enhance the marketing skills of farmers and assist them in placing their products in local, national, and global markets; assist small, limited-resource producers in developing marketing alternatives that enhance profitability; and enhance the ability of minority farmers and landowners to acquire adequate capital, adopt new technologies, and use estate planning and tax incentive programs to retain operations and increase profitability.

RD - Align Pathway positions with program areas directly related to facilitating rural prosperity and economic development.

HBCU Goal 5 – Priority Area(s):

APHIS currently partners with the following private organizations:

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Internship Program

Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

FPAC - FSA - FPAC agencies pilot an MOU with HBCUs located in areas proximate to the new urban pilot communities established by the USDA Urban Agriculture Innovation Center to creatively look for ways those urban HBCUs can assist USDA with growing urban growers. FPAC agencies will also identify urban HBCUs to host FPAC Agricultural field days to introduce USDA to HBCUs who do not have an Agricultural focus or Agricultural programs of study.

FPAC - NRCS - Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

In FY 2020, NRCS executed an agreement to partner with Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) to assist NRCS to achieve agency recruitment goals, and promote employment opportunities for aspiring college students to support the NRCS priority goal to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

NIFA - Strengthen linkages among the 1890 Land-Grant institutions, other colleges and universities, USDA, other federal agencies, and private industry.

Smaller 1890 Universities are often not competitive because of their limited scale. Several programs within the 1890 portfolio enhance their ability to partner and become more competitive. For example, the Evans-Allen Research Program supports agricultural research activities at 1890 Land-Grant Universities, including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University. In addition, this program supports multi-state research. Similarly, the 1890 Centers of Excellence Program supports collaboration amongst the 1890 Universities and other public and private agencies. NIFA staff work with the 1890 Universities to enhance collaboration with faculty at 1862 and 1994 land-grant universities by conducting joint Project Director meetings, peer review panels, and related activities.

RD - Extend outreach to HBCU Organizations to broaden awareness of RD program funding opportunities.

HBCU Metric(s)

Describe not more than five (5) impactful, quantitative HBCU metrics linked to identified HBCU goal(s) and agency goal(s).

- *For example: (Verb) (Item) by (Amount) by (Date), i.e., Increase annual grantmaking to and contracting with HBCU by \$5m by EOFY22.*

HBCU Metric 1:

APHIS - Due to COVID-19, the Universities held virtual AgDiscovery Camps

Total Funding for Camps pre-COVID - \$612,417.00

Total Funding for Virtual Camps - \$239,214.00

Add 2 additional AgDiscovery Programs at HBCUs by end of FY 22.

ARS - Enhance the ARS/1890 Sabbatical Fellows program offering sabbatical opportunities to early-career tenure-track faculty at 1890 universities by providing up to \$100,000 to support expenses (e.g. salary, living expense, and research costs) for a Fellow during a 6 to 12-month residence at an ARS laboratory to conduct cooperative research by striving to increase the number of applicants by at least one applicant for FY21-22.

FAS - Increase Fellowship and Exchange programs awards to HBCUs up to 10% by the EOFY21; increase additional 5% by EOFY22.

FPAC - FSA – FSA obligated \$12,000 to support two (2) national scholars at a 1890 Land-Grant Universities. It is expected that \$24,000 will be allocated for FY 2021 to support these national scholars

FPAC - NRCS - Tennessee State University (TSU): \$1M (2-year agreement)

Tuskegee University: \$600K (2-year agreement)

Alcorn State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Tennessee State University (TSU): \$750K (2-year agreement)

FPAC - Business Center - The FPAC Business Center has recently committed \$4,000 to execute a new FPAC-wide agreement for activities with Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). In FY 2020, FPAC Business Center will execute an agreement to partner with MANRRS to assist the agency to achieve agency recruitment goals and promote employment opportunities for aspiring college students to support the NRCS priority goal to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

The agreement also includes FPAC-wide sponsorship at the level of \$50,000. This includes sponsorship of and attendance at the upcoming MANRRS Annual/National Conference, the largest and most diverse audience of students and professionals discuss issues and concerns regarding diversity in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences – includes a one-day career fair, branding/marketing of the agencies, and on-site hiring opportunities. FPAC engages with hundreds of HBCU and 1890 students annually during this training conference.

FSIS - Increase interaction with HBCUs who have Agriculture and/or Animal Science majors by 25% by the EOFY21 Qt 1.

FS - 1890 Scholars Program – Funding provides financial assistance (full tuition/books/fees) for scholars, considering or pursuing disciplines primarily in natural resources. The program will support 5 students pursuing natural resources and related disciplines. - \$125,000 \$12,500-\$25,000/scholar/academic year, \$1,000 Housing Stipend, Unit is responsible for salary. Targeted Mission Critical Occupations 300 series (Fire, Natural Resources Management), 400 series (Forestry) , 800 Series (Engineering).All USDA/1890 National Scholars are required to compete for appropriate employment immediately after graduation and, if selected, commit to at least one year of service to USDA for each year of financial assistance provided. The program will provide full tuition at Historical Black Colleges and Universities employment, employee benefits, fees, books, and room and board each year for up to 4 years to selected students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

NASS - NASS participates in the 1890 Scholars Program annually and employs at least one additional student by the EOFY22.

NIFA - The agency will award 1890 Scholarships of \$10 million and collect meaningful outcomes data.

RD - Increase participation spending at Major HBCU annual events to \$10,000.

HBCU Metric 2:

APHIS – FY 20 Funding:

Florida A&M University Vet Tech Program - \$350,000.00

Fort Valley State University Vet Tech Program - \$228,200.00

Increase APHIS representation on campuses and work towards increasing Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Agreement funding by FY 22.

ARS - Maintain Support of the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program at 100% representation (ARS sponsorship of at least one 1890 scholar at each 1890 university)

FAS - Subject to budget consideration, increase the number of scholar selections in the 1890 program, from the current four to six by EOFY22.

FPAC - FSA - FSA has recently committed \$23,000 to execute a new FPAC-wide agreement for activities with Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). In FY 2020, FSA will execute an agreement to partner with MANRRS to assist the agency to achieve agency recruitment goals and promote employment opportunities for aspiring college students to support the NRCS priority goal to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

FPAC - NRCS - In FY 2020, NRCS obligated \$1,135,690 to support 52 national scholars at 16 of the 19 1890 Land-Grant Universities. It is anticipated that \$1.15M will be allocated for FY 2021 to support 70 national scholars –a commitment to recruit and select 10 -12 new scholars annually to replace graduated scholars.

FS - The Office of Civil Rights will continue to work in collaboration with HR to further develop and refine the outreach/recruiting events process. Funding will be used for outreach activities with key professional organization, affinity groups and minority serving institutions (i.e., Society of American Foresters, Society for Range Management, Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related, Federally Employed Woman, etc.). Funding will be used towards travels, registration fees, exhibit fees, printing of recruitment brochures and purchase displays, table covers and other supplies. Total funding requested - \$46,753

Greening Youth Foundation Agreement – Funding to support 10 students from our long-standing partner universities (i.e., HBCUs, the three Minority Serving Institutions with accredited Forestry degree Programs: Alabama A&M, New Mexico Highlands University and Salish Kootenai, Tuskegee, New Mexico State University, etc.) and Affinity groups. Over 96% of the students placed over the last 3 years thru Greening Youth Foundation (GYF) were candidates from underrepresented populations. Working as a GYF Resource Assistance Program Intern for the agency will provide students with permanent work experience. Total funding requested - \$290,000.00

Measuring agency' indirect involvement in advancing HBCU competitiveness grounded in the competitiveness priority areas and aligned with agency wide strategic plans, achieved primarily through collaborative efforts within ecosystem, with non-Federal public and private sector partners. For example: Program Performance Objectives and Outcome Measures include: Build school capacity for accreditation, increase classes and natural resource applicability; conduct Forest Service research that reflects the priorities of underserved communities; provide for meaningful student work experiences; provide academic development (undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D.) integral to growing Forest Service research programs addressing problems and achieving

NASS - NASS sponsors interns through the Thurgood Marshal College Fund annually and employs at least one student EOFY22.

NIFA - The 1890 Facilities Program will invest of \$20.5 Million and the agency will enhance utilizations of awarded funds.

RD - Increase RD hiring initiative to onboard two 1890 National Scholars in FY20 and financially support through FY22.

HBCU Metric 3:

APHIS – Rural Coalition - \$205,000 – This organization is an alliance or regionally and culturally diverse organizations working to build a more just and sustainable food system:

- Bring fair returns to minority and other small farmers in rural communities;
- Ensure just and fair working conditions for farm workers; and
- Protect the environment and deliver safe and healthy food to the consumer.

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund - \$105,000 – The Federation’s programs include land retention, research, training and a youth component which promotes educational programs. This organization is primarily based in the Black Belt Region (13 states in the Southern Region of the US) and works with Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

National Black Farmers Association - \$5000 – The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) is a non-profit organization representing African American Farmers and Families in the U.S. The NBFA’s education and advocacy efforts have been focused on civil rights, land retention, public and private loans, educational/employment opportunities, agricultural training and rural development for small farmers.

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project - \$5000 – The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project is a non-profit organization that proposes to enhance agricultural production and sustainability to socially disadvantaged farmer and ranchers in Oklahoma through the dissemination of solar water pump technology. This low-cost, low input technology is ideal for small, limited resource producers in a state often drained by limited water resources.

Operation Spring Plant - \$5000 – Operation Spring Plant is a grass root, non-profit organization that is comprised of limited resourced African American farmers and concerned urban citizens from Region K (Eastern Division) and surrounding counties in North Carolina.

National Women in Agriculture - \$8000 – The National Women in Agriculture Association (NWIAA) was founded and established in February 2008. The organization is headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK. NWIAA is an agriculture outreach, fueled by sisterhood, need, and diversity. NWIAA believes rural women, especially minority women, have been neglected; the lack of resources has stagnated rural development nationwide. NWIAA is the first minority woman-owned and operated organization that provides innovative outreach education that attracts and sustains current and future generations with its innovative, spiritual, and USDA certified education techniques. NWIAA’s mission is to:

- To develop locally grown food security systems in underserved communities (food deserts).
- To guide young members of society to sustain healthy lifestyles and provide future generations with well-rounded role models.
- To help instill the discipline and motivation needed to pursue an education and job opportunities
- To help increase the number of minority participants in the agriculture and farming industries.

Patriots Technology Training Center - \$5000 – The Patriots Technology Training Center (PTTC) is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to “Empowering Students through Technology.” PTTC accomplishes its mission by providing students (grades 5-12) training and exposure to professionals in the areas of science, mathematics, engineering, and computer technology.

Review and increase partnerships with 4 community -based organizations that work with HBCUs by the end of FY 22.

FAS - Increase support for the TCMF Interns from two students in FY2021 by 5% EOFY2022.

FPAC - NRCS - The State and Regional BEPMs conducted outreach activities at 22 HBCUs/1890 colleges, including attending on-site career fairs. Employment outreach activities have included:

- ☐ participating at on-site outreach recruitment events and career fairs at colleges and universities
- ☐ posting and distributing job opportunities to HBCU/1890 universities registered on Handshake website
- ☐ partnering with HBCUs to schedule orientation sessions for USDA employees to speak to students about career opportunities and Farm Bill programs. The employees are normally HBCUs alumni
- ☐ collaborating with HBCU student chapters of MANRRS to share NRCS career opportunities and applying for federal positions and mentoring to students in agricultural fields.

NASS - NASS increases its financial commitment to the cooperative agreement with HBCUs by 50% by EOFY22.

NIFA - The agency will invest \$23 Million through the 1890 Capacity Building Grants utilizing a competitive peer review process. Number of programmatic leadership activities to support faculty/student development at 1890 Universities will be tracked.

RD - Increase our marketing to HBCUs to fill Pathways/Recent Graduate positions by compiling a list of all HBCU POCs in order to disseminate job announcements, and links to upcoming career fairs.

HBCU Metric 4:

APHIS – Currently APHIS supports the following HBCU Programs:

USDA/1890 National Scholars Program - \$220,000 – APHIS currently funds a total of 10 scholars at the following institutions:

Fort Valley State University – 1

Prairie View A&M University – 1

Alcorn State University – 1

Tuskegee University - 1

Tennessee State University – 2

North Carolina A&T University - 2

University of Maryland-Eastern Shore – 2

Tuskegee Veterinary Symposium - \$20,000 – The Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine (TUCVM) is the only veterinary medical professional program located on the campus of a HBCU. The TUCVM has educated more than 70 percent of the nation's African American veterinarians and is recognized as the most diverse of all 30 schools of veterinary medicine in the U.S.

Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) - \$20,000 – This conference is sponsored by Tuskegee University. This event promotes equal opportunity and equitable access to information and technology for sustainable development of communities and natural resources.

Florida A&M University - \$50,000 – This is an outreach agreement which to assist the university in providing information/educational opportunities to the underserved communities farming communities (over 100 citizens).

University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff - \$50,000 – This agreement is used to assist the university in providing outreach/educational opportunities to the underserved farming communities.

Plan to attend at least 4 Career Fairs at HBCUs each and increase the agency National Scholars by 2 each FY.

FPAC – NRCS - Florida A&M University - \$200,000

In FY 2020, NRCS has committed funds to continue to partner with FAMU, implement activities that will increase enrollment and retention in Biological and Agricultural Systems Engineering (BASE). FAMU will enhance the academic performance of graduates who wish to become NRCS employees.

Tennessee State University - \$200,000

In FY 2020, NRCS has committed funds to continue to partner with TSU to help increase NRCS recruitment opportunities in the university's Engineering Program. Several NRCS engineers have successfully completed this program. This agreement supports TSU efforts to improve Engineering student recruitment.

North Carolina A&T University - \$200,000

In FY 2020, NRCS has committed funds to continue to partner with NCA&T to help increase NRCS recruitment opportunities in the university's Biological Engineering (BIOE) Program. Several NRCS engineers have successfully completed this program. This agreement supports NCA&T efforts to improve BIOE student recruitment.

A total of \$600,000 has been approved for these recruitment agreements for FY 2020. The program manager will be working with the university points of contacts to establish new agreements.

NIFA - The 1890 Centers of Excellence, will invest \$6 million and the agency will implement meaningful metrics to track effectiveness.

RD - Increase Pathways Intern/Recent Graduate hires from HBCUs to work directly in program areas related to rural prosperity and economic development.

HBCU Metric 5:

APHIS – Increase partnerships with new Private Organizations that have an interest in HBCUs.

Thurgood Marshall College Fund \$450,000 – APHIS participates in a 10-week intern program designed to employ students from public HBCUs who have an interest in ag-related disciplines through hands on experiences with Subject Matter Experts in the field.

Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) \$126,000 – APHIS is a Diamond Level Sponsor at the annual conference (participates in Panel Discussions; Facilitates Workshops, Accepts Job Applications; and Participates in the Career Fair). APHIS is also a sponsor of the Region (Eastern) Meetings.

FPAC - NRCS - Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) - \$72,000

The agreement also includes annual sponsorship at the level of \$50,000. This includes sponsorship of and attendance at the MANRRS Annual/National Conference, the largest and most diverse audience of students and professionals discuss issues and concerns regarding diversity in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences – includes a one-day career fair, branding/marketing of the agencies, and on-site hiring opportunities. NRCS engages with hundreds of HBCU and 1890 students annually during this training conference.

NRCS has recently committed an additional \$22,000 to execute a new FPAC-wide agreement for additional activities with MANRRS

Thurgood Marshall College Fund - \$50,000

In FY 2020, NRCS partnered with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund to provide \$50,000 in annual conference sponsorship dollars and attendance to the Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute to promote agency mission and brand career opportunities to underrepresented groups, in an effort to market FPAC as agency of choice to minority serving organization to address underrepresentation in workforce and increase workforce diversity which has been chronically below parity. In the past, FPAC has continually executed recruitment agreements to increase the diversity of the NRCS workforce through recruitment of students from minority serving institutions, in support of the priority goal to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce. This opportunity also puts us into a large audience of HBCU students geared towards STEM, which also includes a career fair.

NIFA - The Evans-Allen program will invest \$67 million. Number of multi-state and collaborative activities will be tracked.

RD - Increase informational outreach activities of RD funding opportunities for which HBCU are eligible to apply.

Agency Actions: Strategies and Tactics

Actions should reflect identified HBCU goal(s) linked to agency goal(s) and embody strategies and tactics to improve conditions under which HBCU compete for agency opportunities. Actions include implementing and measuring impact of high-leverage policies, practices, programs and projects that support HBCU competitiveness, all aligned with the FY18-22 agency strategic plan.

Strategies

Describe not more than five (5), high-level, strategic approaches the agency will take to achieve identified HBCU goal(s) linked to agency goal(s).

Strategy 1:

APHIS - Review agricultural programs at the universities and select schools which fit the Agency's strategic plan and program initiatives.

ARS - Leverage resources to develop solutions by collaborating with like-minded scientists and their institutions to expand the breadth and impact of their research.

FAS - Maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Association of 1890 Research Directors to increase awareness of FAS.

FSIS - Devise an action plan to include activities that directly market to HBCU career centers to engage and educate students on the agency's mission and available job opportunities.

FS - To enhance the ability of Minority Serving Institutions to serve our nation's young adults and to collaborate with educational institutions, professional/ student associations, philanthropic organizations, and other community stakeholders to facilitate the development of deeper and more collaborative partnerships with the agency.

NASS - NASS will have Presence State Statisticians review agricultural programs at HCBUs to broaden the potential applicant pool.

NIFA - Fostering HBCU Competitiveness and Success in agency programs. The 1890 Universities compete for and receive only a small percentage of agency funding. This can be due to lack of awareness of the programs, lack of capacity (faculty times, infrastructure, etc.).

RD - Develop a strategic outreach plan targeting HBCUs for where recruiting events and/or conferences are being held to attend 3-6 annually.

Strategy 2:

APHIS - Ensure that schools are informed of internship opportunities and incorporate a Lecture Series where APHIS Subject Matter Experts can speak on topics specific to the curriculum. Also, provide additional financial assistance to Fort Valley State University by the end of FY 22.

ARS - Supporting Centers of Excellence at 1890 Institutions

FAS - Develop external networking relationships on international/foreign affairs with institutions of higher education, specifically MSIs to increase minority participation in FAS programs and services.

FS - Facilitate forums concerning agency programs and opportunities in support of hiring events.

NASS - NASS will work with HBCUs to increase response rates with underserved communities.

NIFA - NIFA will utilize stakeholder feedback from 1890 Institutions to develop action-oriented plans aligned with Agency Mission and Objectives. Stakeholder feedback is collected through various sources, including Project CAFÉ and other targeted activities. This feedback will not only be used to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency but also to address the challenges and opportunities that these communities have.

RD - Reserve funding for two 1890 National Scholar students for two years.

Strategy 3:

APHIS - Discuss with University Officials to discuss the partnerships with other organizations and the impact on the university.

ARS - Continued support of USDA/1890 National Scholars Program and the USDA/Thurgood Marshall College Fund Intern Program

FAS - Increase communications with institutions of higher education, specifically MSIs, to increase awareness of FAS programs, services and employment opportunities.

FS - Create a unified recruitment message that communicates Forest Service culture and speaks directly to potential job applicants through presentations, informational materials and face-to-face interactions. The intent of the message is to help clarify Federal qualifications, application, and hiring process.

NIFA - Enhance efficiency and effectiveness in program management. NIFA will continue to explore methods to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in program management. In this context, a major effort, project CAFÉ is already underway. NIFA is also investing on updating technology and performance management.

RD - Develop a strategic marketing plan communicating with HBCUs Career Centers.

Strategy 4:

APHIS - Partner with Human Resources/Recruitment Officials to focus on underrepresented areas and collaborate with Intra-Agency Groups.

ARS - Strengthen the coordination of communication between ARS staff, HBCU partners and other stakeholders who support Agency programs, build coalitions, and play a critical role in influencing the agricultural issues of today and tomorrow.

FAS - Collaborate with 1890 liaisons, Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, others relevant stakeholders and others to increase communication and information sharing.

FS - Hiring Authorities-Pathways Recent Graduates/Pathways Interns using Demo authority & Merit positions Agency wide Identify additional sources of potential candidates and incorporate into the long-term strategy.

NIFA - Support America's Strategy for STEM Education by partnering with 1890 Universities. Education forms the foundation on which citizens build the capacity and creativity to support civil society and strengthen local economies. NIFA will partner with HBCUs to improve the education experience of their students and to better prepare students for career success in a competitive global economy. This strategy will support, the Trump Administration's 5-year strategic plan for STEM education – Charting a Course for Success: America's Strategy for STEM Education.

RD - Educate hiring managers on the benefits of hiring Pathways Interns/Recent Graduates, where their degree programs align to RD's mission and program work.

Strategy 5:

APHIS - Attend Departmental Cluster Meeting and explore best practice methodologies among other agencies.

ARS - Support scientific computing that efficiently combines disparate information for scientific discovery and enables the transfer of that knowledge quickly and efficiently to other scientists and to the public.

NIFA - Support 1890 Institutions to partner with land-grant universities and federal and non-federal organizations, to enhance the capacity of 1890 to build the needed infrastructure and network to help increase the competitiveness of the nation.

The effectiveness of the 1890 Facilities grants program and other programmatic leadership activities focused on building infrastructure will be enhanced.

RD - Develop targeted informational outreach activities to communicate RD funding opportunities to HBCU.

Tactics: Describe not more than ten (10) specific, detailed, tactical actions the agency will take to achieve identified HBCU goal(s) linked to agency goal(s).

Tactic 1:

APHIS - Develop an information package to include criteria needed to start a program on campus. Also include announcement in Outreach newsletter to the institutions.

ARS - Continue to partner with HBUCs including but not limited to 1890s to increase the number of participants in the student employment program.

FAS - Continue to represent FAS at the 1890 Research Directors Symposia.

FSIS - Research and develop a targeted list of HBCUs with Agriculture and/or Animal Science majors. Contact the school's career center to establish rapport and develop partnerships with appropriate POCs.

FS - Engage with the National Collective Recruitment & Hiring Team (NTAN), participating in hiring events where necessary (i.e. SAF, MANRRS, SRM) Implement a model partnership to benefit students and faculty through workshops, shared development, and sustained recruitment.

NASS - NASS will increase attendance at career fairs at HBCUs.

NIFA - NIFA will conduct targeted outreach activities to enhance the competitiveness of the 1890 Institutions in agency grant programs.

RD - Research HBCUs websites, and social media networks to determine upcoming job fairs, conferences, or events.

Tactic 2:

APHIS - Conduct site visits to Florida A&M and Fort Valley Universities to discuss the need of the department and incorporate a Lecture Series of Subject Matter Experts to speak on specific curriculum topics and to ensure that students are aware of APHIS' services and opportunities.

ARS - Continue refining the Sabbatical Fellows program offering sabbatical opportunities to early-career tenure-track faculty at 1890 universities by providing up to \$100,000 to support expenses (e.g. salary, living expense, and research costs) for a Fellow during a 6 to 12-month residence at an ARS laboratory to conduct cooperative research.

FAS - Currently, FAS disseminate announcements on competitive grants and agreements by using NIFA list serve international point of contacts, grants.gov and ezFed Grants. FAS will expand that dissemination and use list serves from the Department of Education, the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, relevant stakeholders and others.

FSIS - Establish a database of HBCU career center POCs to share Pathways programs job opportunities as they arise. POCs will send blast emails and post job opportunities to their blackboards to inform students.

FS - Coordinate with staff and line officers across the agency to identify supervisors and develop work/training sites that will support meaningful partnership opportunities.

NASS - NASS will work with the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement and other partners to ensure that open positions within NASS are disseminated to the Department of Education and other networks.

NIFA - Provide opportunities for 1890 University faculty to provide stakeholder feedback to NIFA.

RD - Communicate with the CFO, COO, and HR offices to ensure funding is reserved for 1890 National Scholars. Coordinate 1890 placements with management and state directors to determine best possible locations for onboarding.

Tactic 3:

APHIS - Meet with University Officials to discuss other partnerships and the impact of the university (an opportunity to partner and build relationships).

ARS - Continued expansion of partnerships focused on the HBCU community including, but not limited to, World Food Prize, MANRRS, and Thurgood Marshall College Fund.

FAS - Work and coordinate with USDA Liaison Officers at 1890 land grant universities to bolster and broaden student awareness of opportunities with FAS.

FSIS - Work with the Department's 1890 scholar liaisons to develop a list of contacts. The list will be comprised of all individuals like professors and faculty of HBCUs that have an Agriculture and/or Animal Science background. The list would disseminate the job opportunities to whom they deem appropriate.

FS - Promote the Forest Service as an employer of choice and facilitate connections between National Collective Recruitment & Hiring Team (NTAN) members, talent communities and diverse potential applicant pools.

NASS - NASS will attend HBCUs meeting with farmers.

NIFA - NIFA will streamline core business processes to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and transparency in management practices.

RD - Develop marketing material; establish a listing of all nationwide HBCUs to include POCs, and initiate contact.

Tactic 4:

APHIS - Give presentations to APHIS Officials on the National Scholars Program starting in January of each year.

ARS - Use data-driven decision-making to tailor communications tactics to better reach diverse audience of partners, stakeholders, and customers most efficiently and effectively.

FAS - Conduct organized site visits at HBCUs to discuss upcoming grant and agreement opportunities, information on internships, along with hiring notices and events.

FS - Work towards meeting demographic parity levels within the Woman of Color STEM and MANRRS hiring event.

NASS – NASS will continue to communicate with HBCUs research on what data is available.

NIFA – Efficiently award and manage the 1890 Scholarships program to track impacts of federal investment on education.

RD - Collaborate with RD program organizations to identify positions available for PWs/Recent Graduates that align with the mission of the program and the student’s degree plan.

Tactic 5:

APHIS - Expand student contact listing by utilizing the Department of Education’s database (over 450 contacts) to advertise positions/internships within the agency.

ARS - Increase Research and Development collaborations at 1890 Universities.

FAS - Leverage the resources from the FAS Public Affairs Office.

FS - Social media platforms commonly used by the Forest Service, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, will be used to prepare the public for the jobs at events. Each Region public affairs will share National or their own Regional social media information.

NIFA - Continue to implement the new regulations for the 1890 Facilities program to enhance the utilization of program funds.

RD - Develop a summary matrix of RD programs for which academic institutions such as HBCU are eligible to apply.

Tactic 6:

APHIS - Expand agricultural contacts by attending Departmental Sector Meeting s and ensuring that members from the minority farm community are invited.

ARS - Creation of a pipeline of K-12 students interested in agriculture, STEM, and pursuing education at HBCUs by supporting programs providing opportunities for K-12 students to participate in hands-on learning activities highlighting careers in agriculture as well as relevant majors and educational opportunities at HBCUs.

FS - Target diverse educational institutions for the Forest Service Mission Critical Occupations 0400, 0800, 1100 & 2200 series identified in the from the national center for educational statistics site and targeted in the recruitment sources database.

NIFA - Support the 1890 Universities address the community needs arising from COVID-19.

RD - Develop and host RD 101 and funding opportunity webinars for HBCU Organizations.

Tactic 7:

APHIS - Develop an Outreach Newsletter that reaches Universities, Students, and Minority Farmers.

FS - Set critical dates for Recruitment Plan: series finalized, vacancy announcement periods, recruitment plan initiation date, communications roll-out, webinars, other. Identify OPM qualifications required for Mission Critical Occupations (education, experience, both). Establish baseline series and pay plan/grade level. Validate hiring authorities that will be utilized.

NIFA - NIFA (also in collaboration with other USDA agencies), will enhance effectiveness and efficiency of its communication with 1890 Land-Grant Universities to help identify challenges and opportunities the federal partners can address and disseminate information regarding opportunities for these Land-Grants at the federal level.