

**2021 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES –
OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

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AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Secretary established the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to rapidly expand outreach to America’s agricultural community and facilitate greater access to USDA programs. Additionally, OPPE serves as the lead agent for USDA partnership and outreach activities with tasking and reporting authority to direct, coordinate and control all target programs. Programs include all components of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach including Small Farms and Beginning Farmer/Rancher and Youth Outreach and Integration into Workforce Diversity 2030, Office of Tribal Relations, Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison and Supporting Veterans Program Initiative, The Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and any other such programs the Secretary deems essential to serve the interest of USDA.

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) is the largest mission area within OPPE and was established as an office under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Section 14013, P.L. 110-246 in October 2009. The FY 2014 Farm Bill section 12201, added new language to the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program to include veteran farmers and ranchers. OAO’s purpose is to improve access to USDA programs and enhance the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and veteran farmers and ranchers. Through these actions, OAO will support the Department’s commitment to ensuring that all USDA constituents, including historically underserved groups and veteran farmers and ranchers, can participate in and benefit from the programs offered by the Department. OAO serves as an advocate for underserved constituents and as an avenue for them to have input into programmatic and policy decisions to improve their viability and profitability.

In FY 2010, USDA received appropriations to maintain the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) in the Office of the Secretary, which became legislatively mandated in the Agricultural Act of 2014. OTR serves as the primary point of contact for tribal issues in USDA and has been delegated the following authorities by the Secretary of Agriculture: Serve as the Department’s primary point of contact for tribal issues; advise the Secretary on politics related to Indian tribes; serve as the official with principle responsibility for the implementation of Executive Order 13175, “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments,” including the provision of Department-wide guidance and oversight regarding tribal consultation, coordination, and collaboration; coordinate the Department’s programs involving assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives; and enter into cooperative agreements to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas; and to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and veteran farmers and ranchers.

USDA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership (The Center) was formally established in 2002 through Executive Order 13280, in recognition of the need to engage a broad

and inclusive array of faith-based and community organizations to address the needs of low-income and other underserved persons and communities across the urban to rural spectrum. Faith-based and neighborhood organizations are vital to our Nation's ability to address the needs of these communities. The American people are key drivers of fundamental change in our country, and few institutions are closer to the people than our faith-based and other neighborhood organizations. Additionally, The Center is charged with preserving our fundamental constitutional commitments guaranteeing the equal protection of the laws, the free exercise of religion and while empowering faith-based and neighborhood organizations to deliver vital services in our communities as directed by Executive Order 13280 of December 12, 2002 (Responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development With Respect to Faith-Based and Community Initiatives).

USDA's Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison and Supporting Veterans Program Office enables and empowers military Veterans to pursue a career in agriculture or agribusiness, return to rural America, and strengthen the nation's food safety and food security and our rural communities. The Initiative focuses on 3Es: Education, Entrepreneurship, and Employment. USDA's Veterans Program Initiative pulls together information and resources across the department and shares them with transitioning service members, veterans and their families to help them successfully transition into the food and ag sectors and back to rural America.

As of September 30, 2019, there were 49 permanent full-time OPPE employees including 26 employees in Washington, DC, and 23 located in the field.

OPPE did not have any Office of Inspector General or Government Accountability Office evaluation reports during the past year.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND STAFF YEARS

Table OPPE-1. Available Funds and Staff Years (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))

Item	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Enacted	SY	Budget	SY
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations	\$4,711	4	\$4,636	6	\$6,211	8	\$1,957	8
General Provision:								
Farm Opportunities Training and Outreach.....					2,500			
Mandatory Appropriations	10,000	3	15,000	3	15,000	4	17,500	4
Sequestration	-660	-	-930	-	-885	-	-	-
Total Available	14,051	7	18,706	9	22,826	12	19,457	12
Lapsing Balances	-170	-	-75	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Obligations, OPPE	13,881	7	18,631	9	22,826	12	19,457	12
Ob. Under Other USDA Appr.:								
Agency Partnership Outreach	6,605	35	7,058	39	7,240	38	7,240	38
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network	1,833	2	1,833	1	1,833	2	1,833	2
Office of Small Farms Coordination	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beginning Farmers and Ranchers								
Advisory Committee	23	-	-	-	112	-	112	-
Hispanic Assoc. of Colleges & Universities	1,083	-	571	-	-	-	-	-
Thurgood Marshall College Fund	532	-	456	-	600	-	750	-
Other OPPE Reimbursables	22	-	536	-	500	-	500	-
Total Ob. Under Other USDA Appr	10,098	37	10,454	-	10,285	-	10,435	-
Total, OPPE	23,979	44	29,117	49	33,111	52	29,892	52

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND STAFF YEARS

Table OPPE-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Years

Item	2018			2019			2020			2021			
	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Enacted Total	D.C.	Field	Budget Total	
SES.....		1	-	1	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-15		6	-	6	6	-	6	7	-	7	7	-	7
GS-14		1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
GS-13		7	19	26	8	21	29	8	21	29	8	21	29
GS-12		8	6	14	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
GS-11		1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-9		-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-7		1	-	1	1	-	1	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-5		-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	2	-	2
Other Graded.....		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ungraded.....		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent		23	23	46	26	23	49	28	24	52	28	24	52
Unfilled, EOY								-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Perm. FT EOY ...		23	23	46	26	23	49	28	24	52	28	24	52
Staff Year Est		19	25	44	23	23	49	28	24	52	28	24	52

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS*Table OPPE-3. Shared Funding Projects (dollars in thousands)*

Item	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Enacted	2021 Budget
Working Capital Fund:				
Administration:				
Material Management Service.....	\$5	\$2	\$4	\$4
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	10	1	2	2
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	2	2	2	3
Procurement Operations Services.....	3	3	4	3
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	-	-	-	-
Subtotal.....	20	7	12	12
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	11	10	14	12
Financial Shared Services.....	43	157	192	206
Internal Control Support Services.....	-	-	-	-
Financial Management Support Services.....	241	307	325	400
Subtotal.....	295	474	531	618
Information Technology:				
Client Technology Services.....	214	208	293	292
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	84	158	211	207
Enterprise Network Services.....	-	4	7	13
Subtotal.....	298	370	511	512
Correspondence Management and Communication.....	10	11	4	96
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	623	862	1,058	1,239
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	3	6	8	8
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	1	1	1	1
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network.....	-	1	-	-
Medical Services.....	1	1	-	-
Physical Security.....	-	-	1	-
Security Detail.....	1	1	-	1
Security Operations.....	1	2	-	1
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	-	-	1	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	7	12	11	11
E-Gov:				
Grants.gov.....	12	11	11	11
Total, E-Gov.....	12	11	11	11
Agency Total.....	642	885	1,080	1,261

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table OPPE-4. Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Item	Amount
2020 Appropriation.....	\$6,211,000
Change in Appropriation.....	-4,254,000
Budget Estimate, 2021	<u>1,957,000</u>

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

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

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$46,139,000~~]\$47,836,000 of which not to exceed [~~\$5,051,000~~]\$5,143,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed [~~\$1,496,000~~]\$1,336,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed [~~\$6,211,000~~]\$1,957,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, [of which \$1,500,000 shall be for 7 U.S.C. 2279(c)(5)]; [~~\$22,251,000~~]\$28,048,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$21,376,000~~]\$27,161,000 shall be available for Departmental Administration to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department; Provided, That funds made available by this Act to an agency in the Administration mission area for salaries and expenses are available to fund up to one administrative support staff for not to exceed [~~\$3,869,000~~]\$3,941,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed [~~\$7,261,000~~]\$7,411,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: Provided further, That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to transfer funds appropriated for any office of the Office of the Secretary to any other office of the Office of the Secretary: Provided further, That no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: Provided further, That not to exceed \$22,000 of the amount made available under this paragraph for the Immediate Office of the Secretary shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary: Provided further, That the amount made available under this heading for Departmental Administration shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by U.S.C. 551-558: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated 30 days after enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency: Provided further, That of the funds made available

under this heading, funding shall be made available to the Office of the Secretary to carry out the duties of the, working group established under section 770 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6; 133 Stat. 89): Provided .further, That during any 30 day notification period referenced in section 716 of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary, of Health and 21 Human Services or the Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, (as the case may be) shall take no action to begin implementation of the proposal or make any public announcement in any form.

PROJECT STATEMENT

Table OPPE-5. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))

Item	2018		2019		2020		Inc./ Dec.	Chg		2021	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Enacted	SY		Key	SY	Budget	SY
Discretionary Appropriations:											
OPPE.....	4,711	4	\$4,636	6	\$6,211	8	(\$4,254)	1	-	\$1,957	8
General Provision:											
Farm Opportunities Training and Outreach...					2,500		(\$2,500)			0	
Mandatory Appropriations:											
Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers and Veterans	10,000	3	15,000	3	15,000	4	\$2,500	-		17,500	4
Total Adjusted Approp	14,711	7	19,636	9	23,711	12	(\$4,254)	0		19,457	12
Sequestration	-660	-	-930	-	-885	-	\$885	-		0	-
Total Available	14,051	7	18,706	9	22,826	12	(\$3,369)	0		19,457	12
Lapsing Balances	-170	-	-75	-	0	-	\$0	-		0	-
Total Obligations	13,881	7	18,631	9	22,826	12	(\$3,369)	0		19,457	12

JUSTIFICATIONS OF INCREASES

Funding will continue to support the mission of the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement to ensure that small farmers and ranchers, beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and military veteran farmers and ranchers have access to, and equitable participation in programs and services of the Department.

(1) A net decrease of \$4,254,000 (\$6,211,000 and 8 staff years available in 2020)

The funding change is requested for the following items:

A) An increase of \$13,173 for pay costs (\$6,032 for annualization of the 2020 pay increase and \$7,141 for the 2021 pay increase).

This increase will support the pay increase for civilian employees. This increase will allow OPPE to continue to expand outreach to America’s agricultural community and facilitate greater access to USDA programs. This critical increase is needed to support and maintain current staffing levels to meet the program demands and statutory requirements imposed on OPPE. Elimination of the pay cost increase means OPPE would not be able to fund approximately .5 FTE and/or would need to significantly cut travel, training, and mission support. Approximately 53 percent of our budget supports personnel compensation and benefits. Failure to receive this increase would prevent us from fully performing our mission, which is necessary to ensure continued support for

outreach efforts to disadvantaged populations as well as meeting the needs of the Executive Office of the President and members of Congress.

B) An increase of \$9,521 for performance awards.

This increase will support a 1 percentage point increase in awards spending, consistent with objectives outlined in the President’s Management Agenda, to enhance workforce development. Without this additional funding, OPPE will be unable to absorb these costs in FY 2021, resulting in reductions to planned hiring levels, eroding USDA’s ability to meet key Administration priorities contained in this Budget.

C) An increase of \$12,006 for the Department’s increased contribution to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

This increase will cover the expenses for the mandated increase of USDA’s contribution to FERS. These increases were effective January 1, 2020, and impact approximately 8 employees’ retirement packages.

D) A decrease of \$4,288,700 from grant funding

OPPE would reduce the appropriated grant funding and use mandatory funding from the Farm Bill to continue its programs, including grants to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, veterans and others.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND STAFF YEARS

Table OPPE-6. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))

Discretionary

State/Territory/Country	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Actual	SY	Actual	SY	Enacted	SY	Budget	SY
District of Columbia.....	4,541	4	\$4,636	6	\$6,211	8	\$1,957	8
Lapsing Balances	170	-	75	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	4,711	4	4,711	6	6,211	8	1,957	8

Mandatory

State/Territory/Country	2018 Actual	SY	2019 Actual	SY	2020 Enacted	SY	2021 Budget	SY
Alabama.....	\$500	-	\$500	-	\$471	-	\$500	-
Alaska	150	-	150	-	141	-	150	-
Arizona	150	-	150	-	141	-	150	-
Arkansas	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
California	216	-	216	-	203	-	216	-
Colorado	250	-	250	-	235	-	250	-
Delaware	300	-	300	-	282	-	300	-
District of Columbia	700	3	5,430	3	5,985	4	8,860	4
Florida.....	620	-	620	-	583	-	620	-
Georgia	250	-	250	-	235	-	250	-
Illinois.....	150	-	150	-	141	-	150	-
Idaho	100	-	100	-	94	-	100	-
Kentucky.....	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Louisiana	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Maryland.....	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Michigan	100	-	100	-	94	-	100	-
Minnesota	400	-	400	-	376	-	400	-
Mississippi	900	-	900	-	847	-	900	-
Missouri	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Montana	240	-	240	-	226	-	240	-
New Mexico	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
New York	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
North Carolina	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Ohio	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Oklahoma.....	140	-	140	-	132	-	140	-
Oregon	100	-	100	-	94	-	100	-
Pennsylvania	194	-	194	-	183	-	194	-
Rhode Island	100	-	100	-	94	-	100	-
South Carolina	140	-	140	-	132	-	140	-
Tennessee.....	160	-	160	-	151	-	160	-
Texas.....	540	-	540	-	508	-	540	-
Vermont	40	-	40	-	38	-	40	-
Virginia	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Washington	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
West Virginia.....	200	-	200	-	188	-	200	-
Wisconsin	500	-	500	-	471	-	500	-
Obligations	9,340	3	14,070	3	14,115	4	17,500	4
Lapsing Balances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	9,340	3	14,070	3	14,115	4	17,500	4

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table OPPE-7 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Discretionary

Item No.	Item	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Enacted	2021 Budget
Personnel Compensation:					
11	Total personnel compensation	\$906	\$679	726	769
12	Personal benefits	277	232	249	261
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	1	2	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	1,184	913	975	1,030
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	71	124	124	124
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	1	1	1	1
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	81	87	87	87
24.0	Printing and reproduction	25	13	13	13
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	737	38	540	140
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	1,478	589	1,600	541
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	10	20	20	20
31.0	Equipment	4	1	1	1
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	950	2,850	2,850	-
	Total, Other Objects	3,357	3,723	5,236	927
99.9	Total, new obligations	4,541	4,636	6,211	1,957
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)	\$8	\$17	\$18	\$19
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$168,135	\$171,330
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	121,000	122,500	123,700	124,200
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.9	13.9	13.8	13.9

Mandatory

Item No.	Item	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Enacted	2021 Budget
Personnel Compensation:					
11	Total personnel compensation.....	\$316	\$320	\$322	\$325
12	Personal benefits	81	82	83	84
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	397	402	405	409
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	3	3	3	3
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	4	4	4	4
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	61	63	70	75
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	8,875	13,598	13,633	17,009
	Total, Other Objects.....	8,943	13,668	13,710	17,091
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	9,340	14,070	14,115	17,500
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	104,000	108,800	109,700	110,200
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.3	13.4	13.4	13.4

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) created the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and improve agency collaboration. Section 12406 of the 2018 Farm Bill changed the name of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) to OPPE, and the duties previously delegated to OAO, including minority serving higher education initiatives and the 2501 Program, are now delegated to OPPE. Additionally, section 12305 of the 2018 Farm Bill established the position of Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator to promote the role of youth-serving organizations and school-based agricultural education. The coordinator position has been delegated to OPPE.

In addition to the requirements of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE will continue the oversight of:

- The Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison, established under section 12304 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, requiring the Department to help connect returning veterans with beginning farmer training and agricultural vocational rehabilitation programs at USDA and to advocate on behalf of veterans in their interactions with USDA.
- The Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, established pursuant to Executive Order 13280 issued on December 12, 2002, intending to appoint a Director in consultation with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.
- The Women in Agriculture Initiative.
- Administrative and operational functions for the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR).

Current Activities

OPPE develops and maintains partnerships focused on solutions to challenges facing rural and underserved communities in the United States, and connect those communities to the education, tools, and resources available to them through USDA programs and initiatives.

OPPE facilitates partnerships and offers education and resources to foster hope and opportunity, wealth creation, and asset building in rural and underserved communities.

Selected Examples of Recent OPPE Progress

2501 Program:

OPPE implemented the 2018 Farm Bill provisions for the 2501 Program, including a new peer-review grant panel, an increase in maximum grant amounts, longer periods of performance, and priority for nonprofit organizations/applicants. The program led the internal and external informational teleconferences throughout the year to ensure USDA stakeholders had access to the most updated programmatic and funding opportunity information. Accomplishments in FY 2019 included:

- 32 new projects were funded for \$15.6 million in 22 states. An additional \$525,000 was awarded to the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center (The Center) to continue research and policy at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi.
- Provided two capacity building training sessions for all potential grantees during the open period of the Funding Opportunity Announcement in order to address any clarifying questions perspective applicants might have. Provided data testing and user

acceptance to contractors to assist with necessary enhancements of its grants management system (ezFedGrants).

- Hosted the 4th Annual 2501 Symposium in Savannah, GA on September 26-27, 2019. This symposium benefitted the Department’s headquarters and field personnel, USDA stakeholders, 2501 grantees, external partners (nonprofits, for profits, and local officials).
 - The Symposium assisted with garnering feedback from stakeholders as a new mandate in the 2018 Farm Bill. This feedback will be considered for future programmatic enhancements to improve delivery of the program.
- Managed and maintained the Minority Farm Register of minority farmers to keep them informed of USDA activities and funding opportunities. In turn, the register provided USDA agencies access to approximately 5,000 minority farmers and provided oversight to USDA field agencies on the reporting of Receipt for Service.

Farmworker Coordinator:

Farmworker outreach efforts to the community continue during times of declared emergencies. Additionally, OPPE encourages farmworker participation in the 2501 Program and the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Grant Program to assist farmworkers to become agricultural producers or landowners. Farmworker organizations also participated in the USDA nationwide community prosperity summits.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - 1890 Land-Grant Institutions National Program:

The 1890 National Program was established to ensure the Department was implementing provisions of the 1890 “Morrill Act” mirroring the 1862 Morrill Act. The 1890 Program does this by equipping 1890 colleges and universities capacities to benefit American agriculture, rural economies, and more. The 1890 Program staff provide support to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Coordination of Departmental efforts concerning the White House Historically Black College and Universities Initiative (WH HBCUI), including an 1890 Agency Group, and submission of the 2019 Departmental update to the annual WH HBCUI Report;
- Retention and recruitment of talent pipeline of future USDA employees, increasing the diversity of the workforce, including the selection of 51 National 1890 Scholars and 26 Thurgood Marshall College Fund interns;
- Outreach for the newly created National 1890 Scholarship Program, delegated to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and designed to pay for student tuition, books, and additional collegiate costs; and
- Celebration of Departmental successes, including the ceremony for the National 1890 Scholarship Program where all 1890 presidents convened and the 2019 National HBCU Week Conference where Secretary Perdue participated.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program:

The 1994 National Program was established to ensure the Department fulfills the requirements of the *Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994* and *Section 882 of the Federal Agricultural*

Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. The 1994 Program does this by equipping tribal schools' capacities to benefit American agriculture, rural Tribal economies, and to strengthen the United States' food security. To help USDA fulfill its mandated responsibilities, the 1994 Program staff provide critical assistance to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Establishment and maintenance of formal memorandum of agreements with 1994 Institutions;
- Establishment of programs to ensure tribally controlled colleges and Native American communities equitably participate in Department of Agriculture employment, programs, services, and resources, including a social media toolkit for 1994 Institutions to utilize during the recent 25th Anniversary of the signing of the 1994 Act;
- Development of Departmental Regulations, policy, guidance and procedures;
- Heightened awareness of USDA employment, programs, and services, including Department-wide internship-based cooperative agreements; and
- Increased equitable access to USDA employment, programs, and services.

Higher Education Institutions Programs - Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program:

The Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) National Program seeks to represent colleges and universities with 25% or more of their students identifying from the Hispanic descent. The HSI Program staff provide support to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Establishment and maintenance of a formal memorandum of understanding between USDA and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU);
- Hosting of the Kika De La Garza Fellowship, including 17 fellows in 2019, spanning four states, Puerto Rico, and 17 separate HSIs;
- Management of the USDA HACU National Internship Program, including 292 interns at 11 agencies and 3 staff offices in 2019;
- Partnerships at HSIs, including event participations such as AgDiscovery Programs, AgScience Summer Programs, and other programs encouraging careers in agriculture, food, and natural resources; and
- Increased equitable access to USDA employment, programs, and services.

Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (MVAL):

The Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison works to connect veterans to agriculture and agricultural opportunities. As such, the MVAL recently worked with the Farm Service Agency to reduce or eliminate regulations preventing veterans from purchasing farm land with a residence on the land; participated in numerous panel conversations and events as a guest speaker, including the Urban Agriculture in the District of Columbia discussion at University of the District of Columbia, the U.S. Air National Guard Post Deployment Yellow Ribbon event in St. Augustine, Florida, and more; met with various major veterans' groups (American Legion, Veterans' of Foreign Wars, Wounded Warriors, etc.) to discuss farming opportunities and employment opportunities available in addition to the impact of the Faith and Opportunities Summits on the veteran community; collaborated with the USDA Office of Congressional Relations and Congressional offices to create an opportunity to provide veterans with information about the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program; collaborated with the Food Safety

and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to fill vacancies in Food Inspection and Warehouse Examiner positions using non-competitive hiring authorities for Veterans; and anticipated in a teleconference with Rural Development and the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) to discuss sharing brick and mortar resources (telehealth) for veterans who are unable to reasonably reach a VA clinic or hospital. Additionally, USDA signed a memorandum of understanding regarding military spouse employment and worked to expand its outreach efforts to military veterans' spouses.

Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations:

The Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations team supports local community-based organizations (CBO), both faith-based and secular, to strengthen communities, nourish youth, and support community prosperity.

- The team helped host four National *Community Prosperity Training Summits* convening 1,000 community and institutional partners to complete the Leadership in Economic Alliance Development (LEAD) workshop facilitated by land grant extension personnel. The event focused on conducting outreach to rural and underserved communities and providing information on USDA programs on topics such as e-connectivity, economic development, innovation and technology, workforce, and quality of life.
- The team remains engaged in supportive capacity building activities as a part of the *Centers of Community Prosperity* initiative through building strategic partnerships with organizations like Catholic Charities, Islamic Relief USA, and Convoy of Hope. In September 2019, USDA hosted the inaugural *Faith and Opportunity Fellowship*, a training that brought together more than 40 faith-based CBOs to Washington D.C. to dive deeper into skill development around issues related to community economic development, and for awareness and knowledge building of USDA and its Federal partners.
- The team is expanding its work with Federal partners to align activities and maximize our outreach efforts. For example, USDA is collaborating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct urban agriculture workshops in pilot locations across the country.
- Additional collaboration opportunities are being coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to conduct outreach on disaster response and resilience to faith-based organizations.
- The team has also spoken at numerous events this year, including at the Agricultural Direct Marketing Summit in Illinois, Church Women United in Michigan, the Islamic Relief USA grantee convening, and *Community Prosperity Training Summits* in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, Texas, and Mississippi. The team continues to provide direct technical assistance to communities and customers as requests are received.

Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator:

The Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator was established in the 2018 Farm Bill. The position is housed within OPPE and works to promote the role of school-based agricultural education and youth-serving agricultural organizations in motivating and preparing young people to pursue careers in the agriculture, food, and natural resources systems. The

coordinator conducts outreach to programs and agencies within the Department to work with schools and youth-serving organizations to develop joint programs and initiatives between stakeholders. The coordinator also provides resources and input on best practices in motivating and preparing students to pursue careers in the agriculture, food, and natural resources systems. The program is charged with raising awareness among youth about the importance of agriculture in a diversity of fields and disciplines, as well as providing information to persons involved in youth, food, and agriculture organizations about the availability of and eligibility requirements for agricultural programs. Since inception, the program has focused on creating and leading Department-wide functions and activities to support an inclusive, prosperous, intergenerational agricultural workforce. The purpose of these efforts is to ensure meaningful engagement with young people from early childhood to early adulthood. These efforts are accomplished through education, internship opportunities, volunteer experiences and other activities which prepare them for quality employment opportunities in food, agriculture, and natural resources. This commitment further underscores USDA is a relevant, trusted, and innovative partner for their long-term employment goals. OPPE hired the agricultural youth organization coordinator on August 4, 2019.

White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI)

The Department developed a strategic plan for 2019-2020 including benchmarks to monitor progress in engaging Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). The strategic plan aligns with the WHIAAPI and USDA goals and objectives. USDA is currently evaluating the 2017 Census of Agriculture data to improve understanding of the participation of AAPIs in U.S. farming and ranching.

Women in Agriculture

OPPE renewed its efforts to support Women in Agriculture initiatives. These efforts will focus on mentorship and the development of science, technology, engineering, and math skills of the stakeholder group. OPPE will continue promoting ways to include women in USDA outreach efforts and help build leadership and advancement opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness.

Office of Tribal Relations

In FY 2010, USDA received appropriations to maintain the OTR which became legislatively mandated and permanent under the Office of the Secretary through the 2014 Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill Manager's report recognize that "the Office of Tribal Relations is an important function of USDA and should be within the Office of the Secretary. The Director of OTR serves as USDA's primary point of contact for consultation and coordination with Tribal Governments and should continue to directly advise the Secretary on tribal issues and policies. The Managers agree that OTR should coordinate with OPPE to provide outreach and assistance to tribes and tribal farmers and ranchers to improve access to USDA programs and resources." Therefore, housed in the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) facilitates the relationship between USDA agencies and the 573 Federally recognized Tribes, tribal

organizations, and American Indian/Alaskan Native citizens. Additionally, OTR helps bridge USDA and White House priorities.

Current Activities

The OTR facilitates USDA's commitment to the legal government-to-government relationship through program and policy implementation with USDA Mission Areas and offices and those Federally recognized tribes. OTR serves as the primary point of contact for consultation on matters relevant to Indian Country, working to ensure that applicable programs and policies are efficient, easy to understand, accessible, and developed in consultation with the American Indian/Alaska Native stakeholders they impact.

Selected Examples of Recent OTR Progress

- In response to the passage of the Farm Bill and other authorizing legislation to engage with tribal governments and maintain consistency across the Department, the OTR has been working to support the implementation of more than 60 new tribal components in addition to the existing programs and policies offered by each USDA mission area and office, beginning with tribal consultations.
- Tribal Advisory Committee - The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) (P.L. 115-334), requires the Secretary to establish the Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC). The committee is being established in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) as amended, 5 U.S.C. App.2 with the exception of Section 14 which shall not apply to the Committee. The purpose of the TAC is to provide advice and guidance to the Secretary on matters relating to tribal and Indian affairs. The Committee shall facilitate, but not supplant, government-to-government consultation between the Department of Agriculture and Indian tribes.
- Tribal Promise Zones - The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) (P.L. 115-334), provides Federal agency resources and technical assistance to work with local leaders to boost economic activity and jobs growth, improve educational opportunities, reduce crime, and leverage private investment to improve the quality of life in these designated areas.
- Training and Development of USDA Staff - The OTR is focused on the development and placement of expanded training for USDA employees serving as Tribal Liaisons in person and available electronically through AgLearn in the FY 2020. Topics covered are Tribal Sovereignty, Trust Responsibility, Tribal Consultations, History of the Federal-Tribal Relationship, and Nine Fascinating Court Decisions Affecting Indians and Tribes.
 - The OTR is combining the existing three consultation Departmental Regulations into one. A manual and tool kit is being developed to establish procedure, share best practices, and provide templates.
- The OTR has undertaken extensive work to enhance the OneUSDA concept across the Department and to improve customer service in Indian Country and for the agencies. The Native American Work Group is comprised of the senior tribal contacts in the agencies across USDA. The vision of these efforts is to enhance and leverage the talents and abilities of tribal liaisons through facilitated discussions, work groups, a SharePoint site, and other means.