

**2023 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

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***AGENCY-WIDE***

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) was established through a Secretarial memorandum and codified in the 2018 Farm Bill changing the Staff Office name from the Office of Advocacy and Outreach to its current nomenclature. The purpose of the OPPE is to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and improve agency collaboration. The office was delegated oversight of the following:

- Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO);
- Office of Tribal Relations through FY 2021;
- 2501 Program;
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center;
- Higher Education Initiatives;
- Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison;
- Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships;
- Women in Agriculture initiative;
- USDA Youth Programs and Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator; and
- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

OPPE provides strategic outreach and coordination across USDA agencies in addition to working with Departmental stakeholders. OPPE's outreach efforts serve as the primary mechanism by which end users of USDA's programs are provided information and technical assistance. In addition to the above requirements of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE will continue the oversight of third-party internship programs, such as:

- Thurgood Marshall College Fund;
- Hispanic Colleges and Universities Association; and
- E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship Program.

OPPE continues to support and coordinate outreach and technical assistance for historically underserved communities to improve access to USDA's programs and services in an equitable manner. A recent example was OPPE's support and participation on the creation of a USDA Equity Commission aligned with the President's Executive Order on Racial Justice and Equity. The Commission will work to address historical discrimination and disparities in the agriculture sector. OPPE has led the outreach efforts for this new Commission, which resulted in more than 350 applicants to serve on the 28-member Equity Commission.

As of September 30, 2021, OPPE's staff was comprised of 41 full-time permanent employees, including 20 located in Washington, D.C. and 21 located in the field.

**AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**

**Table OPPE-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$5,709	6	\$6,002	6	\$7,002	4	\$10,525	14
Mandatory Appropriations.....	15,000	4	17,500	4	20,000	4	25,000	4
Office of Tribal Relations								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	502	2	1,000	2	-	-	-	-
General Provision.....								
Farming Opportunities and Training Outreach.....	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-
Sequestration.....	-885	-	-998	-	-1,140	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Appropriation.....	22,826	12	26,004	12	28,362	8	38,025	18
Lapsing Balances.....	-3,084	-	-3,035	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	19,742	12	22,969	12	28,362	8	38,025	18
Other Funding:								
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	7,052	38	6,178	31	7,050	35	7,050	35
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network.....	1,833	2	1,833	2	-	-	-	-
Advisory Committee.....	112	-	112	-	112	-	112	-
Thurgood Marshall College Fund.....	600	-	750	-	750	-	750	-
Other OPPE Reimbursables.....	500	-	500	-	500	-	500	-
Total Obligations, Other funding.....	10,285	40	10,435	33	8,412	35	8,412	35
Total Obligations, OPPE.....	30,027	52	36,439	45	36,774	43	46,437	53

**PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs**

**Table OPPE-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	2020			2021			2022			2023		
	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Actual Total	D.C.	Field	Estimated Total	D.C.	Field	Estimated Total
SES.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	3	-	3
GS-15.....	6	-	6	5	-	5	6	-	6	6	-	6
GS-14.....	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	4
GS-13.....	6	17	23	6	15	21	5	17	22	7	22	29
GS-12.....	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	5
GS-11.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	2	-	2
GS-9.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-7.....	1	-	1	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-5.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	1	-	1
Total Perm. FT EOY.....	24	19	43	24	17	41	24	19	43	29	24	53
FTE.....	29	23	52	24	17	41	24	19	43	29	24	53

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

Item	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
<b>Working Capital Fund:</b>				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service.....	\$4	\$4	\$7	\$7
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	2	10	18	18
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	2	2	2	2
Procurement Operations Services.....	4	3	4	4
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	1	1	1	1
Subtotal.....	13	20	32	31
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	-	6	64	38
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	14	15	13	13
Financial Shared Services.....	192	139	136	121
Internal Control Support Services.....	-	-	-	-
Financial Management Support Services.....	421	398	417	417
Subtotal.....	627	552	566	551
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	294	354	295	312
Department Administration Information Technology Office.....	-	29	35	36
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	211	3	4	3
Enterprise Network Services.....	7	32	33	33
Subtotal.....	512	418	366	382
Correspondence Management Services.....	-	-	-	-
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	4	3	3	3
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	1,156	998	1,031	1,005
<b>Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:</b>				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	7	4	5	5
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	1	1	-	-
Medical Services.....	-	3	2	2
Office of Customer Experience.....	1	1	1	1
Physical Security.....	1	-	1	1
Security Detail.....	-	1	1	1
Security Operations Program.....	-	1	1	1
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	1	1	1	1
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	11	12	13	13
<b>E-Gov:</b>				
E-Rulemaking.....	3	3	11	12
Grants.gov.....	10	10	11	11
Total, E-Gov.....	13	13	22	23
Agency Total.....	1,180	1,023	1,066	1,041

**ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

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

**Office of the Secretary**

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$86,773,000~~]\$81,010,000 of which not to exceed [~~\$14,801,000~~]\$10,623,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary[, of which \$9,098,000 shall be available for climate change, including coordinating climate change activities across the Department]; not to exceed [~~\$13,429,000~~]\$2,306,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed [~~\$13,294,000~~]\$10,525,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement; not to exceed [~~\$2,860,000~~]\$6,450,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations; not to exceed [~~\$27,400,000~~]\$35,047,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$26,001,000~~]\$33,300,000 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 the Office; not to exceed [~~\$4,480,000~~]\$4,671,000 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 [~~\$10,509,000~~]\$11,388,000 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 and Intergovernmental Affairs may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level.

The first change eliminates language that specified funding for climate change related activities.

**LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT**

**Table OPPE-4. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2022 Estimate.....	\$7,002,000
Change in Appropriation.....	+ 3,523,000
Budget Estimate, 2022.....	<u>10,525,000</u>

**PROJECT STATEMENT****Table OPPE-1. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2020		2021		2022		2023		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimate	FTE	Estimate	FTE			
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement.....	\$5,709	6	\$6,002	6	\$7,002	4	\$10,525	14	+\$3,523	+10	(1)
Office of Tribal Relations.....	502	2	1,000	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal.....	6,211	8	7,002	8	7,002	4	10,525	14	+3,523	+10	
Mandatory Appropriations:											
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program	15,000	4	17,500	4	20,000	4	25,000	4	+5,000	-	(2)
General Provisions:											
Farming and Opportunities and Training Outreach	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-	
Total Adjusted Approp.....	23,711	12	27,002	12	29,502	8	38,025	18	8,523	+10	-
Sequestration.....	-885	-	-998	-	-1,140	-	-	-	+1,140	-	
Total Available.....	22,826	12	26,004	12	28,362	8	38,025	18	9,663	+10	-
Lapsing Balances.....	-3,084	-	-3,035	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Obligations.....	19,742	12	22,969	12	28,362	8	38,025	18	+9,663	+10	

**Table OPPE-6. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2020		2021		2022		2023		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE		
Discretionary Obligations:										
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement....	\$2,630	6	\$3,025	6	\$7,002	4	\$10,525	14	+\$3,523	+10
Office of Tribal Relations.....	497	2	942	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations.....	3,127	8	3,967	8	7,002	4	10,525	14	3,523	+10
Mandatory Obligations:										
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program	14,115	4	16,502	4	18,860	4	25,000	4	+6,140	-
General Provisions:										
Farming Opportunities and Training Outreach.....	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	19,742	12	22,969	12	28,362	8	38,025	18	+9,663	+10
Add back:.....										
Lapsing Balances.....	3,084	-	3,035	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	22,826	12	26,004	12	28,362	8	38,025	18	+9,663	+10
Less:										
Sequestration.....	885	-	998	-	1,140	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	23,711	12	27,002	12	29,502	8	38,025	18	+8,523	+10

**Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement**

- 1) A net increase of \$4,523,000 and 10 FTEs (\$6,002,000 in the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement from the FY 2022 President's Budget, assuming the FY President's Budget is enacted, which includes the following changes).
  - (A) An increase of \$35,000, which includes \$22,000 for pay inflation and \$13,000 for FERS.  
This increase supports the pay increase which went into effect January 1, 2022, of a 2.7 percent Cost of Living pay increases for civilian employees, and a 1.1 percent increase to cover the expenses for the mandated increase of USDA's contribution to FERS.
  - (B) An increase of \$236,000 for 2023 Pay.  
This increase will support the annualization of the 2022 2.7 percent Cost of Living pay increase and the 2023 4.6 percent Cost of Living pay increase. This increase will enable the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement to meet its objective in administering and overseeing programs relating to USDA operations and statutory requirements. Elimination of the pay cost increase means the OPPE would not be able to fund approximately 1 FTE and/or would need to significantly cut travel, training, and mission support.

(C) An increase of \$245,000 for Shared Cost Programs inflationary costs.

This increase will support an inflationary percentage increase of 2 percent for the Office Partnerships and Public Engagement to continue to fund the required fixed Departmental programs.

(D) An increase of \$4,007,000 and 10 FTEs for Technical Assistance (TA) Training and Partner Organization Development.

This funding will help develop general technical assistance capabilities for partner organizations so that the Department can more effectively serve historically underserved communities and expand participation in and results from USDA programs. Another key aspect of this proposal will be the development of a technical assistance training curriculum for these partner organizations. Through the implementation of this training, the Department intends to establish a certification program for employees of partner organizations through which those employees will be trained on the assistance programs offered by the Department. These funds will also be leveraged with the available funding for the existing 2501 Program that provides outreach and assistance to organizations that support historically underserved veteran farmers and ranchers. Together, the TA training program and the capacity development actions supported with these funds and the 2501 program will significantly expand the Department's outreach to underserved communities and effectiveness with which we deliver programs to historically underserved populations.

**GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs***Table OPPE-7 Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)***Discretionary**

State/Territory/Country	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Estimated	FTE	Estimated	FTE
District of Columbia.....	\$3,127	8	\$3,967	8	\$7,002	4	\$10,525	14
Lapsing Balances	3,084	-	3,035	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	6,211	8	7,002	8	7,002	4	10,525	14

**Mandatory**

State/Territory/Country	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Alabama.....	\$471	\$500	\$500	\$600
Alaska.....	141	150	150	200
Arizona.....	141	150	150	200
Arkansas.....	188	200	200	250
California.....	203	216	216	250
Colorado.....	235	250	250	300
Delaware.....	282	300	300	350
District of Columbia.....	5,987	7,862	10,020	14,900
Florida.....	583	620	620	750
Georgia.....	235	250	250	300
Idaho.....	141	150	150	200
Illinois.....	94	100	100	150
Kentucky.....	188	200	200	200
Louisiana.....	188	200	200	200
Maryland.....	188	200	200	200
Michigan.....	94	100	100	100
Minnesota.....	376	400	400	400
Mississippi.....	847	900	900	1,000
Missouri.....	188	200	200	250
Montana.....	226	240	240	300
New Mexico.....	188	200	200	250
New York.....	188	200	200	250
North Carolina.....	188	200	200	250
Ohio.....	188	200	200	250
Oklahoma.....	132	194	194	200
Oregon.....	94	100	100	150
Pennsylvania.....	183	140	140	150
Rhode Island.....	94	100	100	150
South Carolina.....	132	140	140	150
Tennessee.....	151	160	160	160
Texas.....	508	540	540	700
Vermont.....	38	40	40	40
Virginia.....	188	200	200	200
Washington.....	188	200	200	200
West Virginia.....	188	200	200	200
Wisconsin.....	471	500	500	600
Obligations.....	14,115	16,502	18,660	25,000



**CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS**

*Table OPPE-8 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)*

Item No.	Item	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.....	\$564	\$539	\$635	\$1,874
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	446	408	486	1,441
11	Total personnel compensation.....	1,010	947	1,852	3,315
12	Personal benefits.....	323	300	558	942
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	-	-	-	-
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	1,333	1,247	2,410	4,257
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons.....	35	21	100	150
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	1	4	1	1
23.2	Rental payments to others.....	56	57	56	55
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	2	11	10	10
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	11	25	1,070	1,420
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources.....	408	552	830	1,107
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	6	4	20	20
31.0	Equipment.....	2	70	5	5
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	1,273	1,976	2,500	2,500
	Total, Other Objects.....	1,794	2,720	4,592	5,268
99.9	Total, new obligations.....	3,127	3,967	7,002	9,525
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$17	\$11	\$8	\$8
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$165,000	\$168,135	\$170,657	\$173,217
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$122,500	\$123,700	\$124,200	\$126,063
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.9	13.8	13.9	13.9

**Advertising Expenditures**

There are no contracts for advertising expenses to report.

## **STATUS OF PROGRAMS**

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (hereafter known as the 2018 Farm Bill) created the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and agency collaboration. Section 12406 of the 2018 Farm Bill changed the name of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) to the OPPE. Duties previously delegated to the OAO, 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 programmatic oversight of:

- Higher Education Initiatives
- Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (hereafter known as the 2501 Program)
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center
- The Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison
- The Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
- The Women in Agriculture Initiative
- USDA Youth Programs and Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator
- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

### **Current Activities**

OPPE develops and maintains partnerships focused on solutions to challenges facing rural and historically underserved communities and connects those communities to the educational opportunities, programmatic tools, and resources available through USDA.

The core mission of this office is to advocate, facilitate, and establish partnerships that deliver holistic opportunities from USDA, other Federal agencies, and public and private organizations to our customers, partners, and stakeholders to address the challenges and needs that face the communities they serve.

OPPE renewed the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers Charter and facilitated the selection of new members for the 15-seat committee. This committee hosted four public meetings and proffered recommendations for the Secretary's consideration.

OPPE is reviewing policy to continue the Minority Farm Register of minority farmer subscribers to stay abreast of USDA activities and funding opportunities. Although now inactive, the register provided USDA agencies and stakeholders access to over 5,200 minority farmers.

### **Examples of Recent Progress:**

#### **2501 Program:**

OPPE continued the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill provisions for the 2501 Program, including the new requirement for a peer-review grant panel, an increase in maximum grant amounts, longer periods of performance, and priority for nonprofit organizations/applicants. Accomplishments in FY 2021 included:

- Provided 30 grants for new 2501 projects as well as continued funding for the Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher Policy Research Center. FY2021 project funding totaled for \$18.6 million in 21 States and Puerto Rico.
- Led the internal and external informational teleconferences and outreach efforts throughout the year to ensure USDA stakeholders had access to the most updated programmatic and funding opportunity information.
- Administered the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center grant where an additional \$1.5 million was awarded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to continue research on policies affecting historically underserved farmers and ranchers at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi.
- The 2501 team implemented a full-service Grants Solution Peer Review Process that, for the first time, enabled the team to conduct a fully automated process allowing for greater transparency to reviewers throughout the review process that consists of: reviewer recruitment, handling grant applications, panel reviews, scoresheet documentation, and honorarium payments. This process was implemented to standardize and modernize OPPE's management of grants throughout the entire grant lifecycle. The 2501 Program Staff was unable to host its Annual 2501 Symposium again this year due to COVID 19 and limited resources, which typically brings together the Department's headquarters and field personnel,

USDA stakeholders, 2501 outreach grantees, and external partners (nonprofits, for profits, and local officials).

- Executed on a new mandate from the 2018 Farm Bill to collect required feedback from stakeholders that will be considered for future programmatic enhancements to improve delivery of the 2501 program.
- Assisted with the historical information on the Farm Bill Task Force for the Receipt for Service requirement. Oversight on the reporting was transferred to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and OPPE played an important role on the transition team to implement this change effective in FY 2021.

### **Examples of 2501 Success**

The Kohala Center in Hawaii helps many historically underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers. Two of their most recent successes were in providing technical assistance to a farmer of Hawaiian and Filipino ancestry and a farmer who is a U.S. Navy veteran. The Kohala Center assisted the former on business planning, land acquisition, and working capital to start his farming operation. After developing their business skills, they were approved for a \$100,000 operating loan from USDA's Farm Service Agency. The Kohala Center provided technical assistance to the former veteran in the areas of accounting, financial recordkeeping, business development, land acquisition, and e-commerce marketing. They also received assistance in developing a business plan and preparing federal forms for an application for USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant. They were also recently approved for \$193,438 in working capital for processing and marketing expenses to increase sales of his farm-to-bottle hot sauce products.

Fort Valley State University conducts an intern project where agriculture students intern with small farmers in Georgia for the purpose of assisting rural farmers in their daily operations as well as assisting students in cultivating change in their local communities. A sophomore majoring in animal science performed tasks for local Georgia farmers such as planting and harvesting numerous crops including corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash. The sophomore was also responsible for packaging customers' orders at several local farmers markets. On his path towards becoming a veterinarian, the sophomore appreciated the experience stating "This experience helped me better understand the importance of farming and agriculture for our resources. These simple things will help me better focus on my career in animal agriculture."

### Farmworker Coordinator:

The Farmworker Coordinator works to integrate the interests of farmworkers into USDA programs and outreach. There are an estimated 2.4 million farmworkers working on farms and ranches in the United States. The COVID-19 national emergency highlighted the urgent need to address farmworker needs, as they were deemed essential workers and a key part of the agriculture system. During this time of a declared emergency, USDA food assistance outreach included non-profit and faith-based organizations that aid farmworkers.

OPPE worked with USDA agencies and stakeholder feedback from farmworker organizations, including the newly created Equity Commission and the Farm and Food Worker Relief Program. OPPE worked with the USDA Office of Homeland Security to highlight the impact of human trafficking on the farmworker community, including being a part of the Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) that examines temporary employment visas in the United States and protections within the application process that combat human trafficking.

In line with the Administration's and the Secretary's priorities, OPPE continues to identify and share USDA programs and activities with farmworkers and the organizations that serve the community and the children of migrant farmworkers. OPPE continues outreach at the national and local levels, in areas such as education, grants, housing, and nutrition.

### Higher Education Initiatives (HEI):

Careers in agriculture are diverse, rewarding, and in demand. OPPE assists USDA in efforts to improve student engagement through employment opportunities in the fields of agriculture, science, technology, math, environmental science, management, business, finance, and other agriculture related disciplines. From the classroom to the workplace, OPPE provides USDA support in the areas of student engagement, mentoring, recruitment, retention, and agricultural workforce development. The OPPE field staff is based on the campuses of the 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Colleges and Universities, as well as the Hispanic Serving Institutions. This field staff provides ground support, guidance, and technical assistance to staff and faculty, including the research and extension directors. Also, these field staff provide direct support and assistance to students and families. In addition to the above requirements of the 2018 Farm Bill, OPPE will continue the oversight of third-party internship programs, such as:

- Thurgood Marshall College Fund

- Hispanic Colleges and Universities Association
- E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship Program

#### Examples of HEI Accomplishments:

- Represented USDA and facilitated 19 Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and 11 Cooperative Agreements.
- Assisted students with creating 1,800 personal USAJobs accounts, 1,914 federal resumes, and wrote 121 student letters of recommendation.
- Hosted 24 community outreach meetings reaching 10,427 participants, where information was provided on available Federal and State programs and services that provide funding and technical assistance.
- Conducted 156 workshops reaching 7,508 participants and provided information on the 2501 Program, scholarship programs, internship programs, and employment opportunities.
- Assisted 23 individual 2501 Program grantee recipients in their grass roots outreach efforts to work with the farmers and ranchers to improve their understanding of the programs available through the USDA and other federal agencies.
- Participated in 26 Quarterly State Food and Agriculture Council meetings, provided reports on activities within the communities, and collaborated with the State level USDA staff to develop program and activities to reach the farmers and ranchers within their assigned territories.
- Hosted or partnered on 29 field tours for beginning farmers and ranchers
- Partnered with State level staff to distribute 65 Farmers to Families Food Boxes.

#### 1890 Land-Grant Universities 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 to educate and prepare citizens to benefit American agriculture, rural economies, and more. The Program works collaboratively with local USDA agencies, 1890 Land-Grant Universities, and the private sector (business, education, political, community-based, non-profit and faith-based leaders and organizations) to provide outreach and technical assistance to local communities. The 1890 Program staff provide support to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Management and supervisory oversight to the Program and a field staff of nineteen 1890 liaisons (USDA Liaisons) stationed across the United States southeastern corridor and parts of the mid-west.
- Coordinated Departmental efforts concerning the White House Historically Black College and Universities Initiative (WHHBCUI) and submission of the 2019 and 2020 Departmental update to the annual WHHBCUI Report.
- Retention and recruitment of talent pipeline of future USDA employees, increasing the diversity of the workforce, including the selection of 71 National 1890 Scholars. USDA currently provides opportunities for nearly 157 individual 1890 Scholars. The 2018 Farm Bill (Section 12519) provides conversion authority for the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program. This will allow USDA to maximize its investment in 1890 National Scholars. Additionally, this office initiated the process to re-establish the USDA 1890 Task Force, a partnership with the 1890 Council of Presidents. The Task Force serves as a principal working group for the Secretary and their designees to explore mutual beneficial and short- and long-term goals.
- Updated the 1890 Scholars SharePoint Site to improve access for USDA agencies to identify and select 1890 Scholars in a more efficient manner and improve data collection. Agencies are now able to sort and identify scholars by University, major, minor, etc.
- Collaborated with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to facilitate outreach for the National 1890 Scholarship Program. This effort between NIFA and the 1890 universities exists to increase the number of minority students seeking careers in the agricultural sector.
- Hosted the FY 2021 USDA/1890 National Scholars Program Orientation. USDA Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh served as the keynote speaker, administering the Oath of Office to the Scholarship recipients and acknowledging the commitment and partnership of the newly selected scholars, the 1890 Universities, and USDA agencies and offices. USDA senior executives, students, parents, 1890 Presidents and USDA employees also participated in the ceremony.
- Partnered with higher education institutions to host over 14 summer agriculture recruitment programs; Processed, reviewed and ranked over 2,500 USDA/1890 National scholarship applications; visited 475 schools virtually/physically; secured 107 internships, 25 full time employment opportunities, and 9 graduate school placements.
- Assisted local communities in performing resources assessments to identify federal/state resources to address local challenges.

- Facilitated 19 MOUs; 9 Cooperative Agreements; the creation of 1,800 individual USAJobs accounts; the creation of 1,796 federal resumes; and authored 121 student letters of recommendation.
- Hosted 24 outreach workshops communicating federal and state programs and services to 10,427 participants; 148 workshops (on resume writing and 2501 Program administration) with 7,268 participants; assisted 23 Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher Grantee recipients (2501 grantees) in carrying out outreach efforts in underserved and veteran communities; participated in Quarterly SFAC meetings and collaborated throughout the year on outreach activities within assigned territory; hosted/partnered on 21 field tours; partnered in hosting 45 Farmers to Families Food Box Distributions.

#### 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. These Acts established tribally controlled colleges and universities as land-grant institutions and required the Department to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in concert with the 1994 Institutions to establish programs which ensure these schools and the Native American communities they serve have equitable access to the Department's employment opportunities, programs, services, and resources. There are currently 35 1994 Tribal Land-Grant institutions. The 1994 Program does this by equipping Tribal educational institutions' capacities to benefit American agriculture, rural Tribal economies, and to strengthen the nation's food security. To help USDA fulfill its mandated responsibilities, the 1994 Program staff provided critical assistance to the Secretary of Agriculture with the following:

- Drafted a Congressionally mandated memorandum of agreement between USDA and 1994 Institutions for Departmental approval.
- Assisted with the development of Departmental Regulations, policy, guidance, and procedures for the Office of Tribal Relations.
- Assisted with the convening of a USDA and 1994 Institutions Leadership Group.
- Promoted internships and scholarships to 1994 Institution students.
- Promoted Fellowship opportunities to 1994 Institution faculty and staff.

Examples of recent success within the 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities program include:

- Worked with USDA agencies to raise the visibility of the 1994 National Program and awareness of the systemic barriers for engaging 1994 Institutions regarding employment opportunities, programs, and services to improve equity, thereby reducing Title VI Civil Rights complaints.
- Worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), and Forest Service (FS) to utilize fellowship hiring authority, (Schedule A (r)), to increase the employment opportunities. Result: This work resulted in the increased development of recruitment opportunities (10 NRCS positions, 4 FAS positions, and 2 FS positions).
- Developed two proposals for the USDA to work with the Department of Interior and the Department of Health and Human Services to address the 9 percent decrease in the federal American Indian and Alaska Native workforce. The plan included using their recruitment authorities which focus on Indian Preference along with USDA's training opportunities in natural resource and food and nutrition areas.
- Collaborated with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to improve their outreach to Tribal communities and food advocates resulting in a streamlined effort for engagement and inclusion.
- Collaborated with the Department of Commerce's Office of Native American Business Development to help promote their white paper and plans to engage 1994 Institutions regarding the document.
- Coordinated a summit with North Carolina non-federally recognized American Indians through the State of North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs.
- Provided administrative support for two days during the USDA Tribal Consultations in March 2021 which focused on equity and education. The efforts of the 1994 staff focused on engaging and encouraging the tribal college presidents to participate and to provide testimony.
- Co-presented with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium in August to promote collaborations with the USDA/ARS to engage 1994s through its Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) network.
- Developed a proposal with the Agriculture Research Service for re-visiting the 2015 Terra Preta do Indio Tribal Fellowship focused on collaboration for shared research agenda and increased rigor.

#### Higher Education Institutions Programs - Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program:

The Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) National Program seeks to represent colleges and universities with an enrollment of undergraduate full-time students that is at least 25% Hispanic. The HSI National Program and field-based staff provide administrative and management support to the Secretary of Agriculture in the areas listed below:

- Establishment and maintenance of a formal memorandum of understanding between USDA and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). The HSNIP facilitated a new 5-year MOU signed by Secretary Vilsack on August 25, 2021.
- Hosting the E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship for faculty and staff – which most recently included 25 fellows representing 21 Hispanic Serving Institutions and 6 states. The 2021 Fellowship was hosted virtually in 2021 due to COVID-19.
- Continuing partnership with the Agriculture Research Service (ARS) for the USDA HACU National Internship Program.
- Internal coordination and partnership with the Outreach Division Liaisons to develop programs at HSIs which encourage careers in agriculture, food, natural resources, and other sciences.
- Providing increased access to USDA employment opportunities, agriculture programs, funding, and services.

The HSNIP implements and manages the USDA-HACU Leadership Group which provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of agriculture on issues unique to the Hispanic Serving institutions (to be re-established in FY 2022), in addition to the coordination of USDA’s sponsorship and participation in the annual HACU conference for students and USDA agencies. The work of the HSNIP staff resulted in USDA being acknowledged as the FY 2022 Title sponsor for the event.

#### Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (MVAL):

The Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison works to connect veterans to agriculture, agricultural opportunities, and employment opportunities at USDA. As such, the MVAL worked with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to increase assistance and leadership by appointing a coordinator for every state to provide assistance to veterans that are beginning ranching or farming. The USDA MVAL office, in collaboration with the beginning ranching and farming coordinators, engage every veteran interested in ranching and farming by setting up one-on-one meetings to discuss ways to get into farming and how to best prepare to launch a successful career in ranching or farming. Further, MVAL participated in numerous local prosperity summits across the country to ensure veterans are aware of resources and can participate in local prosperity initiatives. The MVAL has participated in numerous panels 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 Florida (quarterly)
- Hiring Our Heroes (quarterly)
- The Farmer Veteran Coalition (quarterly)
- The Military Spouse Employment Program (monthly)
- The Dairy Grazers (semi-annual)
- The Veterans’ Franchise (semi-annual)
- The Department of Defense (monthly)
- The Veterans Administration (monthly)
- The Department of Labor (monthly), and others.

USDA has maintained a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) Vocational Readiness and Employment Program to provide USDA agencies with veterans to participate in non-paid work experience internships across the country for veterans enrolled in the VA’s Vocational Readiness Program. The MVAL has met with various major veterans’ groups (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wounded Warriors, etc.) to discuss farming and employment opportunities available as well as the impact of the Faith and Opportunities Summits on the veteran’s community. The MVAL has collaborated with the Department of Veteran’s Affairs and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to create an opportunity to provide veterans with information on food insecurity and enrollment information for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as part of their primary care visits within the VA’s healthcare system; collaborated with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the FS to fill vacancies in the Food Inspection and Warehouse Examiner, Agricultural Commodity Food Graders, and Wild Land Firefighter positions using non-competitive hiring authorities for Veterans. In addition, the MVAL worked with the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), AMS, and the FS to maximize the standing of the newly created Apprenticeship Programs. Additionally, the USDA signed a memorandum of understanding regarding military spouse employment and worked to expand its outreach efforts to spouses of military veterans. More recently, the USDA signed a new memorandum of understanding with the Department of Defense (DoD) to participate in their “Skill Bridge” Program to open USDA opportunities for over 200,000 transitioning service members annually. Consistent effort and follow up has resulted

in USDA veteran hiring of 1,517 in 2018; 1,944 in 2019; 2,284 in 2020, and 2,313 in 2021. Also, since entering into the partnership with the DoD Military Spouse Employment Program, the USDA hired 16 Military Spouses in 2021 and created the first ever Military Spouse Association for USDA military spouses in the workforce.

#### The Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships:

The USDA Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, also known as the “Partnership Center,” exists to support faith-based organizations and civic society partners maximize their impact through connection with the USDA. The Center does this by providing the education, tools, and resources to support communities to address their respective needs and challenges by implementing an approach that is grounded in the Secretary of Agriculture’s priorities, with an emphasis on Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity, Climate Change, Nutrition Security, and Supply Chain Resiliency. This consists of conducting outreach and education on USDA programs, facilitating peer to peer engagement, providing technical assistance, and developing strategic partnerships to increase the capacity of faith and community-based organizations. The Partnership Center also emphasizes equity in its work, with a focus on celebrating intercultural and interfaith pluralism through both its internal and external programs and initiatives with faith-based partners. The USDA Partnership Center’s work is grounded in racial equity and opportunity, celebrating diversity and pluralism, and ensuring a diverse workplace. The Partnership Center does this by implementing a variety of core activities focused on program access for faith-based organizations and educational programming for USDA and Federal partners. These include the annual Ramadan Programs Roundtable hosted in partnership with Islamic Relief USA, which this year brought together over 60 participants. Additionally, the Center hosts an annual Interfaith Ramadan Iftar Fellowship Celebration, this year convening over 500 participants and featuring remarks from the White House and leaders from various faith denominations. The Partnership Center is grounded through this work and additionally hosts program roundtables for additional interfaith partners such as the annual Catholic Charities USA Fly in. This work also has practical considerations for challenges faced by many faith-based organizations, and the Center provides technical assistance regarding accessibility of kosher and halal food products. The USDA Partnership Center also hosts quarterly calls focused on highlighting best practices and fostering peer to peer engagement with the aim of increasing the capacity of faith-based organizations and houses of worship as a core piece of its engagement strategy.

In FY 2021, The Partnership Center has hosted a series of four quarterly calls following up on a three-day community food systems workshop at the end of calendar year (CY) 2020. These calls touched upon various aspects of nutrition security, including the intersections of equity, conservation, and food systems, farm stress, as well as rural food insecurity and food as medicine. Collectively, these four calls and workshops convened over 1,000 registrants, with over 500 live participants. Strategic partnerships have also been developed with public and private partnerships to amplify outreach on USDA programs, align activities in the field, and increase the capacity of underserved communities. In FY21, USDA Partnership Center hosted a public private partnership briefing, Building Resilience in Agricultural and Food Systems, in conjunction with the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum, featuring leadership remarks and panels that highlighted the intersection between philanthropy, flexible capital, and capacity building to support access to programs for underserved communities. Over 1,200 individuals registered for the meeting, with over 400 participating live. The team has also expanded its work with Federal partners to plan and implement nutrition security roundtables and other place-based capacity building activities to support state and local partners address their respective needs and challenges. In collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Partnership Center and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted six briefings providing additional detail on urban agriculture and conservation to HUD regional staff, as well as to EnVision Center and Housing Authority partners over 100 partners in total. A partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was also established to support disaster response and supply chain resilience. Three meetings have been hosted in partnership with various states to conduct outreach on programs and develop future programming on topics such as urban agriculture, local and regional food systems, and supply chain resilience, together convening over 150 farmers and emergency managers.

#### Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator:

The Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator 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 its inception, the program has focused on creating

and leading Department-wide functions and activities to support an inclusive, prosperous, and 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 that prepare them for quality employment opportunities in food, agriculture, and natural resources. The coordinator organizes student workshops on financial literacy, power of storytelling, federal careers, careers in agriculture, resume building and USAJobs. Coordinator also works with school districts to provide information on USDA grants and programs. The coordinator assists in identifying opportunities for student organizations, school districts and higher education institutions to partner with USDA. To successfully implement youth programs, the youth coordinator worked with partner organizations, school districts, partner departments and agencies to complete a five-year plan for the youth program. The youth coordinator has worked with managers of all agencies within USDA to form a youth management subcommittee. The youth management subcommittee provided feedback on the plan and recommended areas they would like their agencies to partner with the youth programs. The USDA coordinator created a newsletter for partners across the country. In addition, the success outlined below are a direct result of the creation and dissemination of the newsletter.

- Fostered partnerships with all 15 Federal departments and the White House.
- In four months, the newsletter reached over 2,000 direct contacts and all 15 Federal departments throughout the country.
- Was used by the White House for dissemination of information about the HBCU White House Initiative.
- Assisted the Department in providing the broadest possible dissemination of vacancy announcements, internship opportunities, funding opportunities, programs, and scholarships for USDA Agencies and Center positions.
- Increased the use of awareness and communication through social and electronic media to inform the public of outreach and recruitment events.

The Youth Program leads OPPE in its outreach efforts as a liaison with community-based youth organizations, as well as primary and secondary schools. Partnerships with external organizations are critical to achieving greater diversity and reach outside of USDA and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) pipelines. The program also serves to engage underrepresented, rural, and diverse youth who may not have access to programs outside their communities. The youth coordinator was recently appointed the Co-Chair of the Subcommittee for Advanced Manufacturing to develop the best practices document for the future workforce. The Youth Coordinator:

- Worked with programs in Washington, D.C. to hire ten high school students to begin a pathway for high school students to work in agriculture fields beginning in 2022. This program will be implemented in 2 states by the Summer of 2022. The students will receive training from different agencies and departments to help with career development.
- Developed a partnership with NASA to incorporate agriculture within STEM to reach rural and underserved areas through school programs. The program begins in 2022.
- Participated with other departments and agencies in planning activities that enhance opportunities leading to employment in agriculture fields, such as training, career development, and outreach and recruitment events at professional advocacy conferences, e.g., Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) , Junior MANRRS, Together We Grow, Agriculture Future of America (AFA), National Future Farmers of America Organization (FFA); Head, Heart, Hands, and Health (4-H), etc.
- Worked to encourage the Administration's focus on diversity and inclusion by encouraging and coordinating diverse outreach and recruitment activities with human resources, other departments, and partner organizations.
- Worked with the White House STEM Working Group, The Federal Youth Program Working group, and other federal working groups to establish better outreach in underserved and underreached communities.
- The youth program developed partnerships with schools to participate and partner in Earth and Agriculture Days and other outreach events at primary and secondary schools and in the local community.
- Assisted in the coordination of 3 partner conferences in which Secretary Vilsack was the featured speaker.
- Coordinated USDA agency representation as featured speakers at ten youth conferences since February 2021.

The youth programs have added metrics that enable active measurement of the progress, expansion and outreach of the USDA youth programs. Additionally, these metrics facilitate identification of specific demographic and geographical areas which lack diversity and help to identify recruitment events that expand the youth in the underrepresented group(s). All partner Memoranda of Understanding include the requirement to report on the demographic and geographical data.



White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI):

2017 U.S. Census of Agriculture data reflects Asian American farmers in the U.S. grew 5 percent between 2012 and 2017. A higher proportion of Asian producers than U.S. producers overall are female (45 percent of Asian producers, 36 percent of U.S. producers, in 2017). Asian producers were younger on average (54.9 years compared with 57.5), and more likely to be a beginning farmer. Forty percent had farmed 10 years or fewer, compared with 27 percent of U.S. producers overall.

USDA agencies continue their efforts to expand participation of AAPIs in U.S. farming and ranching by providing equal access for customers with limited English proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language. The Farm Production and Conservation mission area, U.S. Forest Service, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) offer language translation services to assist both customers and staff with overcoming language barriers. OPPE has targeted outreach efforts regarding USDA programs and services and COVID-19 pandemic assistance to organizations and groups serving the Asian American Communities. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted the AAPI community and OPPE worked to raise awareness on anti-Asian bias and violence, which had spiked as a result of the pandemic and associated rhetoric.

USDA is working closely with the WHIAANHPI to develop and support the Administration's whole-of-government agenda to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for the community.

Women in Agriculture:

From 2012 to 2017, the number of female producers increased by nearly 27 percent to 1.23 million. OPPE continues its efforts to support Women in Agriculture initiatives. OPPE will continue promoting ways to include women in USDA outreach efforts focusing on broadening participation, in USDA advisory committees and commissions and USDA programs and opportunities in helping build leadership and advancement opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness by working with organizations servicing women farmers. OPPE outreached to women's organizations on the various programs designed to assist with the impact of the COVID-19 national emergency.

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (ACBFR):

The primary focus of the committee is to identify challenges faced by beginning farmers and ranchers and develop recommendations to help address them. In FY 2021, a public Federal Advisory Committee Act meeting of this committee was held on June 2-3, 2021. Interpreting services were offered, for the first time, in Spanish and Hmong. Attendees were also asked if they wanted more information on USDA programs, and requests were shared with the FSA Outreach Coordinator for follow up. The committee considered USDA goals and objectives to develop and recommend a framework and overall strategy to the Secretary. The ACBFR discussed a variety of subcategories and encouraged USDA to develop funding opportunities, programs, and grants to target the changing face of US Agriculture. The committee did its work by focusing on four areas: Land Access – purchasing and leasing land; Capital - borrower / lender expectations; Information – Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coordinators, communication, and data; and Transition - eligibility and qualifications, barriers, incentive lease agreements, senior and junior member goals, and transition vs. sale. Additionally, the committee worked on a standardized definition of a beginning farmer and rancher. The committee submitted their recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. OPPE provided administrative support and guidance to the committee and the five working groups via teleconferences, phone calls and e-mails.

Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers (ACMF):

The primary focus of the committee is to identify challenges faced by minority farmers and develop recommendations to help address them. OPPE renewed the charter for the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers (after 3+ years of being inactive) and facilitated the selection of new members for the 15-seat committee. This committee hosted four public meetings and proffered recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture's consideration.