2025 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – WORKING CAPITAL FUND

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This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2025 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2022 and 2023, annualized Continuing Resolution levels for 2024, and the President's Budget request for 2025. Amounts for 2024 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the "2018 Farm Bill" is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2023. Amounts shown in 2024 and 2025 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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

AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Working Capital Fund (WCF) was established in 1944, authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2235. The WCF mission is to provide a financing mechanism to support services that the Secretary, with the approval of the Office of Management and Budget, determines is more effective as central services within the Department's Agencies. The WCF is used to finance services provided to USDA and Non-USDA agencies on a reimbursement or fee-for-service basis. USDA services over 100 Non-USDA Agencies* which reduces USDA's share of fixed cost. Centrally managed operations provide efficient, cost-effective, reliable, and transparent services through economies of scale, extensive management oversight, and recurring Fund reviews. The WCF does not receive appropriated funds.

* Some of the non-USDA agencies include Department of Commerce, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Air Force, Department of Army, Department of Interior, Department of Treasury, Office of Personnel Management, Federal Election Commission, Government Accountability Office, United States Secret Service, and Library of Congress. Other Non-USDA Agencies serviced consist of numerous Independent Agencies, Boards, Commissions, and Foundations.

The WCF finances USDA Activity Centers under five functional categories as follows:

Administration

- AskUSDA Contact Center
- Human Resources Enterprise Systems Management
- Integrated Procurement Systems
- Mail and Reproduction Services
- Materiel Management Service Center
- Personnel and Document Security
- Procurement Operations

Communications

- Creative Media and Broadcast Center

Correspondence Management

- Office of the Executive Secretariat

Financial Management

- Financial Management Support Services
- Financial Shared Services
- Internal Control Support Services
- National Finance Center

Information Technology

- Client Experience Center
- Department Administration Information Technology Office
- Digital Infrastructure Services Center
- Enterprise Cybersecurity Services
- Enterprise Data and Analytics Services
- Enterprise Network Services

As of September 30, 2023, there were 2,587 permanent full-time employees, with 446 in Washington, D.C., and 2,141 in field offices.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES
Table WCF-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022 Actual	FTEs	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Estimated	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs
USDA Fee for Service:								
Administration	$48,527	155	$65,051	180	$70,297	220	$68,645	219
Communications	13,085	10	17,473	11	7,198	15	6,805	15
Correspondence Management	3,859	15	3,629	17	4,021	18	4,004	18
Financial Management	148,635	486	153,306	523	165,566	539	158,292	538
Information Technology	859,425	1,290	879,197	1,364	825,996	1,500	799,563	1,438
Subtotal	1,073,531	1,956	1,118,656	2,095	1,073,077	2,292	1,037,309	2,228
Capital Funding Availability	16,560	-	14,110	-	64,628	-	65,359	-
Purchase Card Rebate Proceeds	13,453	-	23,716	-	16,783	-	10,000	-
Unobligated Balances Transfers	1,195	-	33,121	-	34,332	-	-	-
Technology Modernization	3,060	-	20,498	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal (USDA)	1,107,799	1,956	1,210,101	2,095	1,188,820	2,292	1,112,668	2,228
Non-USDA Fee for Service:								
Administration	1,309	3	1,211	3	1,406	5	1,291	5
Communications	640	0	660	0	666	0	665	0
Financial Management	180,865	619	149,307	464	128,891	445	134,690	446
Information Technology	50,245	27	87,543	25	76,777	29	72,523	28
Subtotal (non-USDA)	233,058	649	238,721	492	207,739	479	209,169	479
Total Available, WCF	1,340,858	2,605	1,448,822	2,587	1,396,560	2,771	1,321,837	2,707

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES

Table WCF-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	2022 Actual D.C.	Field	Total	2023 Actual D.C.	Field	Total	2024 Estimated D.C.	Field	Total	2025 Estimated D.C.	Field	Total
SES	8	2	10	16	3	19	5	6	11	5	6	11
GS-15................	34	46	80	43	49	92	26	64	90	24	66	90
GS-14................	78	182	260	94	206	300	66	234	300	65	232	297
GS-13................	146	517	663	116	534	650	107	576	683	107	567	674
GS-12................	89	579	668	71	572	643	76	698	774	79	645	723
GS-11................	40	420	461	29	442	471	43	453	496	43	451	494
GS-10................	5	1	6	5	1	6	1	4	6	1	4	6
GS-9..................	13	129	142	13	97	110	14	84	99	14	84	98
GS-8..................	3	29	32	4	19	22	2	19	21	2	19	21
GS-7..................	13	169	182	16	161	177	20	167	187	20	167	187
GS-6..................	8	23	31	7	23	30	7	15	22	7	15	22
GS-5..................	13	29	42	10	21	31	13	33	47	14	33	48
GS-4..................	1	3	4	2	5	6	1	1	2	0	1	1
GS-3..................	1	-	1	2	0	3	2	-	2	2	-	2
Other Graded	15	7	22	21	6	27	15	18	33	15	18	33
Ungraded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent..........	468	2,137	2,605	446	2,141	2,587	398	2,373	2,771	399	2,308	2,707
Unfilled, EOY....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Perm. FT EOY...................	468	2,137	2,605	446	2,140	2,587	398	2,373	2,771	399	2,308	2,707
FTE*.................	468	2,137	2,605	446	2,140	2,587	398	2,373	2,771	399	2,308	2,707

*Total FTEs are all inclusive of workforce categories including temporary positions.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT
Table WCF-3. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
2024 Recurring Operations Estimate [1/]	$1,280,817
Change in Estimate	-34,339
Recurring Operations Estimate, 2025	1,246,478
2024 Capital Availability	$64,628
Change in Availability	731
Capital Availability, 2025	65,359
2024 Purchase Card Rebate Proceeds Availability [2/]	$16,783
Change in Availability	-6,783
Purchase Card Rebate Proceeds Availability, 2025	10,000
2024 Unobligated Balances Transfer Availability [3/]	$34,332
Change in Availability	-34,332
Unobligated Balances Transfer Availability, 2025	-

NOTES

[1/] This amount includes both USDA and non-USDA fee for service activities.

[2/] Under 7 U.S.C. 2235a, refunds or rebates received on an on-going basis from a credit card services provider under the Department of Agriculture's charge card programs may be deposited to and retained without fiscal year limitation in the Department's WCF to fund management initiatives of general benefit to the Department of Agriculture bureaus and offices as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary's designee, subject to further limitations under general provisions of annual appropriations acts that funds be spent on capital investments.

[3/] The Secretary has authority to transfer unobligated balances to the WCF for acquisition of plant and capital equipment for financial, administrative, and information technology services of general benefit to agencies of the Department of Agriculture. The amount for 2024 (unobligated 2023 funds) will not be known until the end of 2024 Project Statements

Table WCF-4. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022 Actual	FTEs	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Estimated	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
Fee for Service:										
Administration	$48,527	155	$65,051	180	$70,297	220	$68,645	219	-$1,652	-1
Communications	13,085	10	17,473	11	7,198	15	6,805	15	-393	-
Correspondence Management	3,859	15	3,629	17	4,021	18	4,004	18	-17	-
Financial Management	148,635	486	153,306	523	165,566	539	158,292	538	-7,274	-1
Information Technology	859,425	1,290	879,197	1,364	825,996	1,500	799,563	1,438	-26,433	-62
Subtotal	1,073,531	1,956	1,118,656	2,095	1,073,077	2,292	1,037,309	2,228	-35,768	-64
Capital Funding Availability	16,560	-	14,110	-	64,628	-	65,359	-	731	-
Purchase Card Rebate Proceeds	13,453	-	23,716	-	16,783	-	10,000	-	-6,783	-
Unobligated Balances Transfers	1,195	-	33,121	-	34,332	-	-	-	-34,332	-
Technology Modernization	3,060	-	20,498	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal (USDA)	1,107,799	1,956	1,210,101	2,095	1,188,801	2,292	1,112,668	2,228	-76,152	-64
Non-USDA Fee for Service:										
Administration	1,309	3	1,211	3	1,406	5	1,291	5	-115	-
Communications	640	-	660	-	666	-	665	-	-	-
Financial Management	180,865	619	149,307	464	128,891	445	134,690	446	+5,798	+1
Information Technology	50,245	27	87,543	25	76,777	29	72,523	28	-4,254	-1
Subtotal (non-USDA)	233,058	49	238,721	492	207,739	479	209,169	479	+1,429	-
Total WCF	1,340,858	2,605	1,448,822	2,587	1,396,560	2,771	1,321,837	2,707	-74,723	-64

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Working Capital Fund

The WCF serves as the Department's financing mechanism for provision of centralized financial, information technology, administrative, and communications services. The WCF also serves as the principal financing mechanism for investment in corporate-level systems and as the Department's information technology working capital fund under the authority of the Modernizing Government Technology Act.

(1) <u>A net decrease of $74,723,000 and a net decrease of 64 FTEs for recurring operations ($1,396,560,000 and 2,771 FTEs available in 2024)</u>.

The decrease reflects estimates of costs in response to anticipated levels in service demand from USDA and non-USDA agencies for WCF-supported services. Amounts shown for 2024 are estimates of costs only, and USDA and non-USDA agencies will be billed their share of actual costs. The staff years represent activity centers' best estimate of the most economical use of human resources to deliver expected demand for goods and services.

(2) <u>An increase of $731,000 for capital corpus availability ($64,628,000 available in 2024)</u>.

The amount available in 2024 represents capital resources available to the WCF to support the purchase of capital assets defined as those assets with an acquisition cost of at least $25,000 for equipment and at least $100,000 for software, with a useful life of at least 24 months. Allocations are made to WCF-supported activities up to the limits of availability in support of the provision of services with amounts allocated to be repaid to the fund to preserve available capital.

(3) <u>A decrease of $6,783,321 for purchase card rebate proceeds availability ($16,783,321 available in 2024)</u>.

The amount available in 2024 represents the estimated proceeds to be deposited in the WCF under existing legislative authority, plus any residual unallocated amounts from prior years. Amounts are allocated up to the limits of availability for management initiatives of general benefit to the agencies of the Department, subject to further limitations that might be imposed by Congress limiting spending to capital items.

Expenditures under this section are deemed a high priority by the Department and are estimated as follows:

TableWCF-5. Purchase Card Rebate Expenditure Plan (In dollars)

Item	2024	2025
Amount Available	$16,783,321	$10,000,000
Allocated	16,500,000	-
Unallocated	283,321	-

USDA plans to utilize this funding flexibility to pay for critical investments that would otherwise not be possible due to constrained budgets. Notification is herein provided to the Committees on Appropriations of the intent to make the following investments, including a request to obligate funds transferred to the WCF in 2024 of the following allocation ($16,500,000):

FPAC/NRCS Student Management Platform (enterprise-wide) - $1,500,000

To convert and hire more pathways, recent graduates, postgraduates, third party interns, youth, and national service corps graduates into full-time permanent, temporary worker, or term appointments across USDA. The Student Management Platform will create a process that supports the communication with USDA students encumbering appointments via Title IV, agreements, or other USDA programs as deemed necessary to reduce the administrative burden and increase visibility between agencies in converting/hiring students into full-time positions. This process allows effective communication, streamlines the process of Agencies working with the students and the hiring managers, and allows for students to be empowered to update their education status, work desires, and assist the human resources' professionals in placement.

NFC New Human Capital Management (HCM) Solution - $5,000,000

As an Office of Personnel Management (OPM)-certified Human Resources (HR) Shared Service Center (SSC), NFC provides HR services to over 170 government and quasigovernment agencies including 35 USDA agencies, centers, and staff offices. EmpowHR, NFC's current suite of HR solutions, utilizes Oracle Peoplesoft 9.0 and support for this product is currently only guaranteed through October 2025. To meet USDA's and other Federal government customers' evolving and increasing complex requirements, as well as secure long-term system supportability, NFC must implement a new HCM solution. A new Software as a Service (SaaS) HCM solution will modernize the legacy infrastructure, enable agile responsiveness to dynamic business requirements, and enhance operational efficiency and overall customer experience.

RD Program Loan Accounting Systems (PLAS) Retirement-General Ledger- $8,000,000

Program Loan Accounting System (PLAS) Retirement – General Ledger (GL) is part of the FSA and RD legacy systems to be consolidated with FMMI, enabling USDA to complete its goal to have one Financial System. The investment will interface FSA and RD data so that FMMI will become the financial system of record and the borrower loans will continue to be serviced/managed, using the loan system servicing logic, in the loan servicing systems (feeder systems). The implementation will use the current financial data feeds from the legacy systems and convert the data into a format that can be integrated into FMMI. Attributes will be designed to meet current Treasury reporting requirements including Central Accounting Reporting Systems (CARS) and Government Treasury Account System (GTAS). This integration will allow FSA and RD to be efficient and effective in reporting financial data that meets current requirements.

NASS/REE Modernizing Data Collection Equipment- $2,000,000

NASS deals with over thousands of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural businesses throughout the year collecting Agricultural Statistics. The public wants access to the latest and greatest technology when dealing with the government. Unfortunately, NASS data collection equipment is out of date and sometimes fails when meeting with farmers/ranchers. As more data calling enumerators are in a hybrid status, equipment must be updated. The demand on farmers and ranchers for NASS to respond to surveys and census over the internet and on mobile devices is rising. NASS' current processing systems employ several outdated technologies. Time is of the essence to get this outdated technology modernized and off of aging equipment NASS has a critical need to replace its legacy data collection system. This funding will allow NASS to contact the respondents in a more efficient manner.

(4) A decrease of $34,332,207 for unobligated balances transfer availability ($34,332,207 available in 2024).

No funds are included in the Budget. The estimate may change should Congress renew authority provided in general provisions of the 2024 annual appropriations to implement transfers of discretionary unobligated balances. Allocations would be made up to the amount available, consisting of amount transferred plus any residual unallocated amounts from prior years.

Expenditures under this section are deemed a high priority by the Department and are estimated as follows:

TableWCF-6. Unobligated Balances Transfers Expenditure Plan (In dollars)

Item	2024	2025
Amount Available	$34,332,207	-
Allocated	33,363,281	-
Unallocated	968,926	-

USDA plans to utilize this funding flexibility to pay for critical investments that would otherwise not be possible. Notification is herein provided to the Committees on Appropriations of the intent to make the following investments, including a request to partially obligate funds transferred to the WCF in 2024 of the following allocations ($33,363,281):

OGC Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) – $11,486,901

To comply with Federal recordkeeping requirements, USDA will procure a comprehensive cloud based electronic records management system (ERMS) to support the M-19-21 mandate and the M-23-07 mandate, which reaffirms the principles of the M-19-21 but extends the deadline to June 30, 2024. The USDA ERMS will serve as the Department's document and digital information asset management

repository and records management system. The USDA ERMS will sit over all existing systems and software, allowing USDA to seamlessly conduct business in the systems being used, while capturing the records that are created. The USDA ERMS can also accommodate case management, workflows, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Privacy Act (PA), legal holds, Continuity of Operations (COOP), classified records management and Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) business needs.

OGC eDiscovery Modernization Initiative - $2,016,380

USDA seeks to align its eDiscovery functions with both current government and legal industry standards as well as the expectations of the Courts, and the Department of Justice. This funding will enable the Department to streamline its eDiscovery operations and eliminate functional and technology redundancies, resulting in significant savings to the taxpayers through both technological and staffing efficiencies and the reduction in funds spent settling litigation matters for eDiscovery related issues where the facts and law were otherwise favorable to the Government.

RD Customer Portal Single-Family Housing Direct (SFHD) Program- $7,000,000

The investment will provide a modern customer portal that will integrate with the Sagent (Loanserv) system to retrieve and update information based on the borrowers' actions within the Portal. In addition, the Portal must include integration with a document management system to allow the borrower to upload and view documents related to their loan, a correspondence system to allow for online correspondence (to/from borrowers), and integration with the tabular data warehouse to allow for reporting needs. Through this investment, USDA will achieve several goals of Executive Order 14058, *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government,* which aims to modernize Government and services, promote transparency and responsiveness, and reduce administrative burdens for public-facing functions. At Rural Development (RD) this investment will positively impact over 200,000 customers, and over 1,500 employees. There are many intangible benefits to be realized, such as improved customer experience, administrative operational improvements, which will allow appropriated funds to be invested in other modernization efforts, protection of personal data, and expediency. This initiative will also support USDA's Strategic Goal 6, Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that is Proud to Represent USDA, because enhancing electronic correspondence would eliminate many tedious manual processes. Furthermore, RD would realize tangible savings of at least $4,400,990, in year 1, with a total Return of Investment period of 1.3 years or earlier. This estimate is based on a conservative adoption rate of 10 percent, on the first year of implementation. The expectation is that the adoption rate would increase over time.

FPAC Environmental Compliance Tool- $960,000

To develop an online tool to streamline the required environmental compliance for program activities funded under the Farm Loan Program, Farm Storage Facility Program, Emergency Conservation Program, Conservation Reserve Program, among others. In addition to program activities, other function areas such as GSA leasing will benefit from development of this tool. Ultimately, modernizing the environmental review process will enable FPAC to have insight into current environmental impacts of its actions and, in turn, will allow for the substantiation of additional categorical exclusions. This initiative aligns with USDA's Strategic Goal to "Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions" by utilizing the implementation tactic to "continue to pursue automation via the Robotics Process Automation and internal systems and tools development and enhancement to simultaneously reduce cost associated with repetitive or administrative activities or reduce cycle times, thus improving customer experience".

FPAC/RMA Compliance Data Warehouse- $700,000

The move of the RMA Compliance Data Warehouse to EDAPT, like many large information technology projects, has suffered additional schedule slips pushing the delivery from the previous date of August 2023, and then again to late November 2023, and now March 2024. These schedule slips resulted in over $4 million of additional cost during this migration to EDAPT. From development migration contractor issues to EDAPT core platform issues (both managed by AFS), RMA finds itself struggling financially to maintain operations while we transition. This includes covering the lease and maintenance for the final 3-months of the on-premise RMA Compliance Data Warehouse platform. This project supports the USDA

Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022–2026, Objective 6.3 "Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions" by migrating a siloed on-premise system to EDAPT, the Department's shared analytics solution.

OCIO Migration of Enterprise Data Analytics Platform and Toolset (EDAPT) - $7,500,000

For the migration and modernization of the EDAPT platform to include more affordable USDA cloud hosting, enterprise AI/ML features, promote data sharing, and improve data security and zero trust. It is expected that migration to USDA cloud hosting would result in a lower total cost of ownership but requires an initial one-time migration cost. Failure to migrate EDAPT from the current managed service provider will result in a significant annual cost increase in 2025 and beyond that may be untenable for USDA Mission Areas. Effectively leveraging data analytics and AI through an enterprise data analytics and AI platform is critical for USDA to achieve its ambitious goals in addressing climate change, increasing nutrition security, ensuring thriving rural communities and economies, increasing opportunity for agricultural products at home and abroad, and ensuring that USDA advances equity across all our programs and services.

AMS/MRP Packers and Stockyard 2.0 Development - $2,300,000

The Fair-Trade Practices Program needs to complete an IT modernization that replaces an aging IT System supporting fair and competitive US agriculture trade markets, a Biden Administration's initiative. The new system, Packers & Stockyards 2.0, is essential to conduct all mission-related activities, including conducting audits and investigations, carrying out enforcement actions in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel (OGC) and Department of Justice (DOJ), and facilitating complex analyses of competition in the livestock industries and markets. In total, these efforts by PSD personnel across the country support fair and competitive markets, supply chain sustainability, rural communities, and U.S. competitiveness in international trade.

FPAC/FSA CCC Financial Improvement Program- $1,400,000

Due to financial management weaknesses within Farm Service Agency/Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA failed to meet the requisites necessary to achieve a full scope financial statement audit opinion in 2015 and continues to have elevated risk. Because of longstanding audit findings and material weaknesses, the Department needs to be aggressive in showing progress in its remediation efforts. Financial management improvement is critical to ensuring taxpayer funds are used wisely and meeting the intended needs of the programs. USDA (FPAC/OCFO) continues working on the migration of FPAC (Farm Production and Conservation) Business Center accounting into the USDA's Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI) system. The FPAC's program financial accounting is not integrated with the rest of USDA in FMMI, creating reconciliation and other issues, additional costs to maintain a separate set of systems, and the risk of maintaining a clean accounting audit. Continued funding of this project will help ensure the core issues with program and financial processes are addressed and facilitate more sustainable levels of effort for FPAC resources each audit cycle. The first phase was completed in 2019. The remainder of the multiphase multi-year project that will move federal financial management processes from FPAC Accounting Systems to FMMI will resume in 2024. Simultaneously, FPAC FSA will remediate the program application feeder systems to create auditable financial data to integrate with FMMI.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTES

Table WCF-71. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022 Actual	FTEs	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Estimated	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	$3,553	8	$7,078	13	$3,878	11	$3,964	11
Alaska	$4,293	8	$3,835	7	$3,142	8	$3,285	8
Arizona	$7,636	16	$7,932	15	$5,248	15	$5,367	15
Arkansas	$5,588	13	$7,427	14	$5,563	15	$5,682	15
California	$20,736	41	$23,535	45	$14,844	40	$15,601	41
Colorado	$91,824	153	$75,841	145	$128,011	202	$116,402	176
Connecticut	$866	2	$2,422	5	$2,462	4	$2,416	4
Delaware	$2,078	4	$3,986	8	$1,854	5	$2,267	6
District of Columbia	$167,090	287	$21,691	41	$199,886	398	$198,053	399
Florida	$17,332	34	$23,000	44	$15,236	33	$15,441	33

State/Territory/Country	2022 Actual	FTEs	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Estimated	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs
Georgia	$12,650	28	$19,663	37	$14,010	33	$14,120	33
Guam	$996	2	$1,049	2	$742	2	$758	2
Hawaii	$2,691	5	$2,825	5	$1,483	4	$1,515	4
Idaho	$7,389	16	$9,546	18	$6,675	18	$6,818	18
Illinois	$18,565	36	$22,099	42	$18,449	37	$18,353	37
Indiana	$6,370	13	$7,267	14	$5,799	13	$5,825	13
Iowa	$11,270	25	$12,763	24	$10,464	24	$10,550	24
Kansas	$50,270	93	$54,237	103	$50,442	68	$48,957	68
Kentucky	$6,346	12	$7,558	14	$5,026	14	$5,211	14
Louisiana	$399,549	886	$428,350	816	$364,745	985	$354,803	974
Maine	$3,072	6	$3,623	7	$2,596	7	$2,273	6
Maryland	$66,869	118	$146,084	278	$45,310	113	$44,977	112
Massachusetts	$2,267	4	$2,624	5	$1,854	5	$1,894	5
Michigan	$4,144	9	$7,653	15	$3,708	10	$3,788	10
Minnesota	$10,223	21	$10,925	21	$8,585	22	$8,679	22
Mississippi	$13,128	29	$38,468	73	$21,237	34	$20,784	34
Missouri	$127,505	242	$95,692	182	$158,666	228	$145,073	198
Montana	$7,791	18	$9,538	18	$8,680	18	$8,689	18
Nebraska	$9,104	20	$11,403	22	$7,606	21	$7,771	21
Nevada	$2,611	6	$3,148	6	$3,203	6	$3,173	6
New Hampshire	$832	2	$848	2	$742	2	$758	2
New Jersey	$3,996	6	$3,128	6	$2,225	6	$2,273	6
New Mexico	$12,713	27	$14,804	28	$11,694	30	$11,620	29
New York	$7,680	15	$10,733	20	$7,653	18	$7,719	18
North Carolina	$16,634	33	$18,435	35	$14,695	32	$14,737	32
North Dakota	$6,580	14	$7,627	15	$5,563	15	$5,884	16
Ohio	$5,898	12	$7,287	14	$4,821	13	$4,924	13
Oklahoma	$6,564	15	$8,404	16	$6,912	16	$6,961	16
Oregon	$8,141	18	$9,223	18	$6,682	18	$6,812	18
Pennsylvania	$7,156	15	$10,053	19	$8,484	17	$8,565	17
Puerto Rico	$2,602	5	$3,047	6	$2,400	6	$1,894	5
South Carolina	$6,296	13	$8,840	17	$7,197	14	$7,173	14
South Dakota	$4,298	9	$5,066	10	$2,967	8	$3,030	8
Tennessee	$5,253	10	$8,104	15	$4,625	12	$4,800	12
Texas	$66,146	138	$52,260	100	$27,095	65	$28,745	67
Utah	$6,902	13	$6,519	12	$4,629	13	$4,730	13
Vermont	$2,138	4	$2,624	5	$1,113	3	$1,136	3
Virginia	$24,739	40	$72,329	138	$19,651	32	$19,345	32
Washington	$7,434	16	$9,862	19	$5,563	15	$5,682	15
West Virginia	$4,503	10	$4,844	9	$3,338	9	$3,409	9
Wisconsin	$12,300	26	$13,954	27	$10,462	26	$10,598	26
Wyoming	$3,646	8	$7,601	14	$2,903	9	$3,193	10
United Arab Emirates	-	-	$525	1	-	-	-	-
Obligations	1,306,260	2,605	1,357,378	2,587	1,280,817	2,771	1,246,478	2,707
Capital Funding Available	34,268	-	91,445	-	115,743	-	75,359	-
Total, Available	$1,340,528	2,605	$1,448,822	2,587	$1,396,560	2,771	$1,321,837	2,707

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table WCF-8 Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C.	$43,092	$45,320	$45,522	$48,326
	Personnel Compensation, Field	218,105	229,382	246,172	255,821
11	Total personnel compensation	261,197	274,702	291,694	304,147
12	Personal benefits	99,377	104,574	111,255	115,793
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	132	-45	164	124
	Total, personnel comp., and benefits	360,706	379,231	403,113	420,064
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	1,695	3,057	4,624	3,876
22.0	Transportation of things	1,755	2,305	1,923	1,885

Item No.	Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	5,797	5,194	5,469	4,769
23.2	Rental payments to others	2,625	2,600	3,993	3,363
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	198,439	206,358	137,306	143,305
24.0	Printing and reproduction	199	131	219	232
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	2,390	1,714	3,051	2,042
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	331,831	372,685	313,274	248,521
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	138,433	145,357	155,181	154,985
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	1,416	872	2,180	1,940
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	204,985	210,876	229,054	244,650
26.0	Supplies and materials	11,985	11,465	5,404	3,118
31.0	Equipment	78,373	106,978	131,770	89,087
	Total, Other Objects	979,922	1,069,592	993,447	901,774
99.9	Total, new obligations	1,340,628	1,448,822	1,396,560	1,321,837
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)	2,462	1,714	2,050	1,825
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	$189,476	$195,564	$204,560	$210,084
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	$97,125	$101,190	$105,845	$108,702
	Average Grade, GS Position	$13	$13	$13	$13

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The WCF is a financing mechanism that supports five functional categories (Administration, Communication, Correspondence Management, Financial Management, and Information Technology) across seven Departmental organizations. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), in addition to its responsibilities in financial policy and operations, is responsible for the administration of the WCF. The staff attached to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) supports the OCFO in fulfilling this mission.

Administration

The activities under this heading are managed under the Assistant Secretary for Administration and include the following:

AskUSDA Contact Center

Current Activities

The AskUSDA Contact Center (ACC) serves as the centralized entry point for the public to access information and assistance from USDA through one website, one phone number, and one email address, resulting in an integrated solution with a singular point of entry for USDA customers from multiple channels. The ACC also provides self-service to citizens using a knowledge-based management system that houses thousands of knowledge articles on askusda.gov for easy access to specific information where customers can quickly find answers to their questions without contacting USDA. The ACC supports all nine mission areas and staff offices by serving as the "voice of the USDA," helping citizens navigate and understand USDA programs, services, and information.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The ACC Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) answered 83,662 inbound calls, responded to 29,584 chats, and answered 92,807 emails for customer inquiries for USDA's various mission areas. There were 231 new articles created and 1800 articles reviewed for content and updates. By providing an omni-channel contact center, the ACC meets customers where they are whether through chat, calls, or emails and eliminates wait times because CSRs respond to various questions about USDA services from 29 agencies and staff offices in real-time.

The ACC staff provided multilingual support to customers using the ACC personnel who speak several languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Arabic, Cambodian, Urdu, Hindi, Farsi, Pashto, and Mandarin. In 2023, the ACC staff supported 7074 Spanish-supported cases/calls, 61 Portuguese cases/calls, 37 Arabic-supported cases/calls, and eight Mandarin-supported cases/calls.

The ACC responded to inquirers wishing to become cooperators for outreach to underserved farmers and those wishing to partner with USDA by becoming a regional hub or vendor. The CSRs collected vital information to inform USDA from potential state and regional partners to manage the farm loans financial assistance program. The information collected by ACC personnel was pivotal to deciding on who the cooperators, vendors, and regional hubs would be located to assist applicants in seeking financial assistance under the Inflation Reduction Act.

ACC also helped set up the new Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) section 22007 Contact Center by guiding the operations of a contact center and how the ACC currently operates, helping to develop the CSR scripts for the CSRs and developing language for the ACCs CSRs to address inquirers of the IRA 22007 for transfers to the new contact center. In doing so, customer responses were provided faster, more effectively, and efficiently.

The ACC Future of Work (FOW) staff managed employee inquiries for the Supervisor/Manager Telework Policy from the FOW Inquiry Mailbox by responding to employee inquiries regarding updated policy information determined by the Office of the Secretary regarding the changes requiring supervisors and managers to return to work. Managers and supervisors across USDA agencies and staff offices received responses to their inquiries within 24-48 hours regarding the announcement made by the Office of the Secretary (OSEC).

Human Resources Enterprise Systems Management

Current Activities

The Human Resources Enterprise Systems Management (HRESM) Division provides Human Resources (HR) Enterprise System Management in support of USDA's strategic goals and is aligned with the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Human Resources Line of Business (HRLOB). The vision of OPM's HRLOB is to create

government-wide, modern, cost-effective, standardized, and interoperable HR solutions providing common core functionality to support the strategic management of human capital. To realize this vision, USDA has moved to a Shared Service Center delivery model where HR information system operations reside. The vision of HRESM is to improve mission delivery by deploying an integrated workforce system, which facilitates strategic and advisory HR service delivery and streamlined HR transaction execution.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

In 2023, the HRESM division partnered with Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Information Security Center (ISC) and the National Finance Center (NFC) on the EmpowHR Distributed Security Administrator (DSA) in-sourcing initiative to standardize account access management for the EmpowHR system. This effort strengthened USDA's application security posturing and ensured data confidentiality, availability, and accountability are occurring in accordance with Federal regulatory and statutory requirements. The USDA's completion of conversion was in May 2023, and results are strengthened the NFC's application security controls, bolstered documentation, and centralized provisioning/deprovisioning of EmpowHR security access to improve application auditability.

In support of USDA Strategic Goal six (Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that is Proud to Represent USDA), HRESM established USA Staffing Quarterly Program Reviews for USDA Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) members and their designees. These reviews are an opportunity to discuss agency talent acquisition and onboarding system priorities, concerns, and improvements. This enhancement to the meeting strategy allows agencies to provide real-time and first-hand feedback on usage experience directly with OPM leadership as well as to hear system information such as new system features as well as data collection relating to vacancy announcements, certificates issued, and number of hires.

The HRESM team implemented several releases for eHR Apps - Enterprise Performance Management Application (EPMA) USDA-wide and included significant enhancements to many of the employee and supervisory functions (Enterprise Remote and Telework Agreement as well as Awards and Recognition modules), which allows for cost savings across the department. Additionally, enterprise use of this application improved data analysis capabilities and facilitated the timely implementation of the new OPM Enterprise Human Resource Integration (EHRI) Telework Agreement type codes requirements for USDA. eHR Apps maintained an extremely high availability – an uptime rate of over 98 percent which includes outages imposed on EPMA from external factors.

HRESM worked collaboratively with OPM to reduce the backlog of outstanding transfers in the electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) system. At the start of the fiscal year, USDA was averaging 60 percent success rate in meeting OPM's requirement of transferring the eOPF to the gaining agency or National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) within 90 days of the request. In working with the agencies over the last three months, USDA is now at a 90 percent success rate for being compliant with OPM regulations. This is important to protect the rights and benefits of federal employees by properly maintaining the documents and being timely in responding to transfer requests, so employees have a complete and accurate OPF.

Integrated Procurement Systems

Current Activities

The Integrated Procurement Systems (IPS) provides modern, integrated procurement automation tools to the USDA acquisition community through the Integrated Acquisition System (IAS). IAS serves as the enterprise-wide administrative procurement system for the Department and continues to prove its value daily. The Credit Card Service Center (CCSC) is responsible for the planning, developing, and implementing its charge card program under SmartPay3 and providing consolidated, Department-wide governance in this program to further USDA's mission.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The IAS team successfully processed $6.3 billion in obligations, representing a 22.5 percent increase from 2022. The IAS investment continues to achieve a green status from OCIO for its overall management of cost, risks, contracts, schedule, incremental software development, performance metrics, and adherence to OCIO governance guidelines.

In support of utilizing automation including Robotics Process Automation (RPA) to save time in the procurement process, the IAS team implemented an award correction utility, that allows contracting personnel to perform many

actions that previously required an administrative modification, which was utilized 2,700 times in four months of operation saving approximately 2,700 hours in manual work. The effort enhanced the extensive contract closeout process automation initially implemented in 2022, resulting in over 50,000 contracts closed in an automated fashion, freeing up $13 million in unliquidated obligations (ULOs) during 2023.

With the validation of U.S. Bank Payment Plus as a viable payment solution, OCP collaborated with OCFO and the U.S. Bank to develop and deploy the IAS-U.S. Bank Payment Plus Interface, a key component of AgPay XPress. A pilot of five AgPay XPress vendors was launched in 2023 resulting in an initial rebate of $3,000 for contract payments with that figure expected to grow with more enrolled vendors and activity in 2024.

Materiel Management Service Center

Current Activities

The Materiel Management Service Center (MMSC) is responsible for the general management and coordination of Departmental logistics operations and activities, including personal property acquisition, use and, disposal, transportation systems, warehousing, and program support systems, as well as maintaining unified, coordinated supply support systems that meet the ongoing and numerous emergency needs of various programs of the Department. The MMSC operates the USDA Sales Center, Centralized Excess Property Office (CEPO) and the Consolidated Forms and Publications Distribution Center (CFPDC) which is part of the Federal Asset Sales Program. The center provides a central unit for excess/surplus personal property disposal used by USDA Agencies, staff offices and divisions in the Washing DC Metropolitan area, and effectively create cost avoidance to USDA agencies through the rehabilitation of office furniture and reuse of as-is furniture and excess equipment. MMSC's recycling and re-use programs fully supported Executive Order (EO) 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance,* dated October 5, 2009.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

In 2023, 101 metric tons of carbon equivalents were reduced which relates to the reduction of greenhouse gases released into the environment.

CFPDC took advantage of the web ordering and inventory management system and used a new cloud-based system. CFPDC provided over $3 million in sales and administrative supplies to the Food Safety Inspection Service nationwide. The total amount of packages filled USDA wide were 37,462, and 885,120 total units filled, which included 563,327 units filled for FSIS only. Additionally, CFPDC oversaw customer support of the Base Supply Center (Online Retail Supply Store) and processed and shipped 9,874 supply orders filled, that included 44,774-line items filled and 123,363 units filled.

The CFPDC has also updated the web-based ordering system by making it more interactive for our agency liaison to update their product line pictures in real time that have no reuse or re-sale value to UNICOR, Federal Prison Industries, Inc. recycling program managed by the Department of Justice. Agencies are encouraged under the Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) to purchase greener electronic products; reduce impacts of electronic products during use; and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe way. Additionally, 3982 units of scrap were properly processed for agencies valued $694 thousand. CFPDC staff recycled 23 pallets or 52 tons of forms and publications in support of USDA environmental objectives.

CEPO completed another year as a Federal Asset Sales Center. A total of 20 sales were conducted in 2023 rendering proceeds of $1.1 million. Additionally, there were 4,450 assets transferred back to government agencies saving over $2.1 million, by reutilizing excessed property. Excess supply support was provided to USDA and 13 non-USDA agencies in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to ensure proper accountability and disposal for over 52,400 units of excess personal property valued at $41.3 million. Additionally, 96 tons of scrap metal was sold for revenues over $15,292.

The partnership between OCIO-CEC and MMSC represents an opportunity for USDA to deliver enterprise Depot Services through a shared services model which provides computer services to approximately 102,000 customers in more than 3,400 field, state, and headquarters offices located across the United States and its territories and protectorates across the globe. This depot will be processing 30,000 – 65,000 computers per year.

CEPO works diligently to provide excess computer equipment to schools and non-profit organizations. This program was created in response to Presidential Order 12999 *Computers for Learning Program (CFL)*, empowering America's children for the 21st century. This program allows Federal agencies to transfer used/excess computers to schools and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of education. CEPO receives and screens an estimated 1,500 pieces of computer equipment daily. In 2023 CEPO reissued 4,841 computers to educational institutions saving them $2.1 million.

Mail and Reproduction Services

Current Activities

The Mail and Reproduction Services (MRS) is responsible for managing the USDA Mail Management Program, Departmental Mailing List System, Transportation Operations, and Copier/Duplicating Operations. The MRS is responsible for directing centralized printing and copier/duplicating systems, automated systems providing mailing list services, package delivery, and chauffeur services, and a staff support system of divisional financial management, program analysis, and administration.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The MRS Printing Services received the Right of First Refusal (RoFR) authority on May 13, 2022, which informed the stakeholders to utilize the in-house Printing Services for their printing requirements before seeking outsourced solutions. Agencies welcomed the advantages of the in-house print-on-demand service and more importantly, the one-stop-solution of having USDA brand documents printed, packaged, and shipped anywhere across the country and internationally. As a result, in 2023 the Printing Services completed approximately 4,120 print orders and shipped 8,634 packages compared to 2022 stats of 2,049 print orders and 2,883 shipments.

MRS has worked with the Digital Infrastructure Services Center (DISC) team to add the Mail Safety and Security Training to the AgLearn list of offered courses. The original concept was to move the training from classroom style to a contemporary delivery method. The MRS team also worked with the OCIO Enterprise Application Status (EAS) team to ensure the Mail Safety and Security Training was Section 508 Compliant. USDA employees with some contact with the mail or any interested employee can now take the training anytime, anywhere through the AgLearn Portal.

Personnel and Document Security

Current Activities

The Personnel and Document Security (PDS) Activity Center within the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) leads the collaborative security program to safeguard USDA people, information, national industrial security program, equipment, and property. The office implements, and oversees the Department's security policies, programs, and standards; delivers security training and education to USDA personnel; and provides security support to mission areas, agencies, and staff offices. Additionally, PDS provides liaison support to the intelligence community on security matters affecting USDA.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The PDS adjudicated 4,576 public trust background investigations and 716 national security adjudications. The average time to adjudicate the Public Trust background investigation was reduced by 30 percent. In September 2023, PDS undertook an adjudication surge project, adjudicating 1143 "no issue" background investigations in 19 days.

In late Spring 2022, OHS was made aware of the Kansas City Space Optimization Project requiring USDA to return the Beacon Facility to the General Services Administration in early 2024. To ensure no loss of operational capability, protection of classified National Security Information (CNSI) and classified systems, and Devolution activities, PDS needed to find, build, and relocate activities by December 2023. Work started September 23, 2023, and was completed in December 2023 with accreditation of the facility by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), USDA's SCIF accrediting authority.

PDS implemented use of Secure Web Fingerprint Transmission (SWFT), which eliminates the need for paper-based capture and handling of fingerprints, expedites the background check process by reducing invalid fingerprint

submissions, provides end-to-end accountability for sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data, and implements stringent security standards for all electronic transactions. The SWFT provides an alternate method for fingerprinting applicants which accelerates the onboarding process from security approval to final offer.

The USDA completed the transition to the National Background Investigation System (NBIS) in June 2023, 90 days ahead of the established September 2023 deadline. PDS intended to fully expense Agency Specific Funding to pay for enhanced NBIS functionality but, because of persistence, PDS became a benefactor of a free pilot of NBIS Adjudication Case Management set-up costs; saving $230 thousand for 90 licenses across USDA. The use of NBIS Case Management will enable a singular workflow within one NBIS Org that will be utilized for all of USDA's adjudicators.

Procurement Operations Division

Current Activities

The Procurement Operations Division (POD) provides the full range of cradle-to-grave procurement support (acquisition planning, market research, solicitation, evaluation, negotiation, source selection, contract award, contract administration, and contract closeout) to the Department in support of information technology services and other Department-wide procurement actions.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

POD supported its customers with over $1.6 billion in new 2023 contract obligations for construction, information technology solutions, civil rights, human resources, and financial systems support services. 71.5 percent of the obligations were set aside for small businesses, exceeding the USDA small business goal of 55 percent. POD increased small business participation through virtual outreach and introductory meet and greet sessions with new and emerging small business vendors interested in doing business with the Department. Noteworthy contract awards are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

POD remains integral to USDA's strategy to meet the Department's Small Businesses goals. POD collaborates with USDA Agency-level Small Business Specialists to develop and share best practices for outreach targeting small businesses. We also support USDA Mission Areas to ensure they reach their small business goal baseline for the year. In 2023, POD participated in multiple local and virtual small business outreach conferences, including in rural areas, where POD had the opportunity to provide information to all manner of small businesses on how to do business with USDA. The outreach efforts allowed POD to meet 550+ new small businesses and vendors identified as potential partners with USDA throughout internally scheduled meetings and the local and virtual conferences.

POD awarded the National Administrator and Regional Hub Administrator task orders in support of USDA's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP), also known as the Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs or Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The awards totaled $150 million spread over three delivery task orders that contract the National Administrator and Regional Hubs to conduct outreach, assist with the financial assistance application process, process Applications, manage program call centers, and operate local offices to achieve USDA's goal of providing financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending before January 1, 2021. The POD's work, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary (OSEC), the Office of General Counsel (OGC), and the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Mission Area, is a vital piece of a much broader effort at USDA to improve equity and access and eliminate barriers to its programs for underserved individuals and communities.

POD partnered with the OCIO Digital Infrastructure Services Center (DISC) to develop a new contracting solution, allowing the DISC Cloud Broker Officer (CBO) to conduct a detailed study of the USDA cloud environment and offerings in the commercial marketplace. The result was a comprehensive market research and acquisition strategy for procuring and adopting cloud services across USDA through the creation of STRATUS as its cloud acquisition vehicle and a centerpiece of USDA's IT strategy that best fits USDA's IT governance model, the emerging cloud operating models, and the vision for a true USDA Digital Enterprise. The STRATUS program estimates $7 billion in spending over ten years across three pools of services, covering Cloud Service Providers (CSPs), Cloud-related IT integration services, and Software as a Service (SaaS), including technical support services. POD released solicitations for Pool 1-3 in September of 2023, with an award expected in 2024.

Communications

Activities under this heading are managed by the USDA Office of Communications.

Creative Media and Broadcast Center

Current Activities

The Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC) provides creative design, video, multimedia, and radio production studios, allowing agencies access to technology and content development with shared cost efficiencies. CMBC helps ensure the USDA brand value of "One USDA" guidelines and department regulations. CMBC promotes content marketing development and the growth of social media outreach. CMBC's creative services include field video production, publication layout, illustrations, public service outreach, posters, brochures, websites, infographics, podcasts, banners, trade-show exhibits, visitor centers, special media events, and creative development and delivery of information campaigns. CMBC's Core Services team provides USDA enterprise-wide benefits with maintenance and support of the www.USDA.gov web portal and a variety of USDA websites, social media tools, and platform accounts, such as USDA Facebook, USDA YouTube, USDA X (formerly Twitter), USDA Instagram, and more.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The CMBC staff produced for Secretary Vilsack, Deputy Torres Small, and subcabinet options to maximize their time and improve audience reach gaining efficiency from their on-premises studio facility with the ability to record more than one presentation on different sets and make script changes and review presentations. Prerecording or doing live remarks from the studio allows more audiences to be reached.

The CMBC team managed a record $16.5 million in projects in 2023. Two examples of success are the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's effort to successfully prevent the spread of African Swine Fever and for the National Agricultural Statistics Service to reach targeted participants in the Ag Census. To date, the African Swine Fever has not been reported in the United States.

The CMBC staff created a series of videos for Natural Resources Conservation Service called "Conservation at Work" and for Farm Service Administration a "How We Work", video series. Productions help local producers understand and adopt successful conservation and management practices. Videos provided on-demand education to producers and landowners and reduced the need for on-location events and allowed limited state staff to reach more citizens.

The CMBC team produced a Forest Service a 20-part series of "Leave No Trace" to lower maintenance costs. The training modules to educate them about public visiting national lands to lower maintenance costs.

Correspondence Management

Office of the Executive Secretariat

Current Activities

The USDA's Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES) serves the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture by processing official correspondence and other documents on behalf of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and maintains their official records. OES prepares or supports preparing briefing materials, proclamations, reports, responses to correspondence, letters and certificates of thanks, congratulations, condolences, and many other documents. OES receives and analyzes all documents addressed to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and assigns them to the appropriate workflows and agencies or staff offices for action. OES's work, governed by more than thirty laws and Departmental regulations, directly impacts USDA's image and policymaking.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

OES processed over 6,000 records and tracked over 250,000 public campaign letters in 2023, benefitting Secretary Vilsack in his Constitutional role as the principal decision-making officer of an executive department to support the policy and legislative agenda of the Biden-Harris administration. OES streamlines document processes among 300 USDA employees by eliminating unnecessary steps, simplifying tasks, and automating workflows as much as

possible. Over the 2023, OES reduced errors, saved time, and used communication networks to optimize processes that resulted in a 15 percent increase in processing speed over the prior year.

OES serves as an interagency to move documents from draft to final to distribution, often under tight deadlines, among other cabinet Secretaries and White House staff, for example, the Tribal Treaty Rights Memorandum of Understanding Best Practices and Flowchart guidance documents; the White House Memorandum of Agreement for All Inside Implementation; the USDA 2023 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Action Plan and the 2023 White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs; the White House the Alternatives and Reentry Committee Strategic Plan; the Establishment of the Hydrogen Interagency Task Force.

OES gathers clearances from key offices and finalizes agreements from the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's correspondence and agreements to governors, major interest groups, industry, and other public figures, for example, the Memorandum of Understanding with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the letters to Governors regarding distribution of infant formula, the Women, Infant, and Children Program, and the Universal School Meals program.

Financial Management

In addition to its responsibilities for the administration of the WCF, the OCFO manages the following WCF activities:

Financial Management Services

Current Activities

Designated by the Department of Treasury as a Financial Shared Services Provider, Financial Management Services (FMS) administers the FMMI system to provide financial management services to USDA agencies. FMS is responsible for providing accounting services; administrative payments processing and disbursement certification; standard financial systems; Intragovernmental Payment and Collection (IPAC) Suspense Clearing; Property Suspense Clearing and Inventories; Fund Balance with Treasury (Net); and Treasury reporting. FMS maintains the Department-wide master data file for vendor payments and issues Internal Revenue Service Form 1099 to government contractors. FMS also administers several other financial management systems to support USDA agencies and organizations, including travel, personal property, real property, telephones, utilities, miscellaneous income, Automated Cash Reconciliation Worksheet System (ACRWS), Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS) Real Property management system, and the Online Tracking and Reconciliation System for intergovernmental financial transactions. FMS supports the processing of USDA data through other organization-owned systems, which include domestic travel, purchase card transactions, and procurement activity using the IAS.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

On September 6, 2023, the Financial Management Services (FMS) awarded the contract for the FMMI conversion to the FMMI Intelligent Enterprise Transformation (FIET) program with a scheduled completion date of second quarter of 2025. In preparation for the transition of the financial system of record, FMS completed seven strategy and assessment efforts including business process performance optimization, analytics strategy, integration strategy, and S/4HANA security migration planning and continued working on the Information Lifecyle Management (ILM) project to develop and implement a data archival strategy and system prior to the S/4HANA migration, reducing the cost and improving efficiency of the new system. These, in concert with other prerequisite assessments, will facilitate FIET execution in a timely, secure, and effective manner enhancing FMS's customer experience without compromising system availability and integrity.

FMS is responsible for the maintenance and functionality of EzFedGrants for USDA agencies and Staff Offices. With the tentative transition of FMMI to FIET in 2025, the EzFedGrants system will no longer be available after the fourth quarter of 2024. As an alternative to EzFedGrants, FMS developed and implemented the integration of six web services between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) GrantSolutions system and FMMI in August 2023. Creating the interface between GrantSolutions and FMMI will enable USDA grant-making agencies another option in managing grants throughout the grant's life cycle. GrantSolutions is a Grants Quality Service Management Office (QSMO) service provider.

FMS remediated 14,287 system vulnerabilities including security patches and configuration issues within the various operating systems and applications. Using the Onapsis tool, FMS identified and remediated 199 vulnerabilities. By proactively mitigating system vulnerabilities, FMS ensures all of USDAs Financial Management Systems are available, functional, and current preventative measures to maintain the integrity of our systems and information.

FMS successfully implemented the addition of the Budget Object Class (BOC) field in the FMMI to Financial Statements Database Warehouse (FSDW) interface file for beginning balances. This new requirement was mandated by Treasury's Fiscal Services and OMB, with an October 1, 2023 (2024) implementation date. The use of the existing crosswalk will ensure the data reported in both the Governmentwide Treasury Account Symbol Adjusted Trial Balance System (GTAS) and DATA Act remains properly aligned.

National Finance Center

Current Activities

The National Finance Center (NFC) processes payroll for over 600,000 Federal employees on a bi-weekly basis. Additionally, NFC provides back-end processing and reconciliation for OPM government programs, including the temporary continuation of health care coverage, balancing Federal employees' election of health benefits with insurance carriers, and providing back-end processing of insurance elections allowed under the Health Care Reform Act. NFC is an OPM-designated Human Resources Shared Services Provider and continues to support Federal initiatives by fully participating with OPM in executing its shared services role providing human resources, payroll, and data center services to Federal agencies.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The NFC successfully demonstrated results to achieve its mission for executing shared services activities for human resources, personnel services, payroll services products, and programs. Fiscal year 2023 carried with it unprecedented challenges and changes; however, the NFC continued to provide premiere services to the more than 600,000 employees serviced through the portfolio of customer agencies.

The highly visible, critical, cross-cutting initiatives included onboarding the new NFC Director in March 2023, successfully completing a major upgrade to the EmpowHR application and infrastructure, implementing the 2023 pay raise along with completing the Federal Tax Processing and Forms for W2 and W2C, completing MD-715 and 462 reporting, processing enrollments during the Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season, participating in the first annual OCFO Financial Management and Payroll Services customer engagement session in Washington, DC, establishing a Customer Joint Executive Steering Committee, establishing a community outreach program targeting New Orleans area youth, onboarding NFC's first 1890 scholar, and partnering with OCIO to help strengthen the NFC and USDA security posture by participating in a successful Pen Test and Red Team Assessment. In addition, during 2023, NFC reached its 50th anniversary milestone.

As a premier shared services provider that is entrusted with more than half of the Federal Government's payroll obligations, NFC continued its focus to strengthen USDA's cybersecurity posture by addressing and implementing several initiatives. NFC implemented Multifactor Authentication (MFA) in partnership with OCIO. Completed a major upgrade of EmpowHR (application and infrastructure) to the latest version of 8,59 and Windows Server 2019. Successful passing two independent Cyber Assessments of NFC's applications and received a three-year Authority to Operate (ATO) for NFC's EmpowHR application. NFC will continue to partner with OCIO to ensure the future success and viability of the organization to ensure the support and safeguarding of customer data to the organizations that the NFC serves.

NFC is uniquely positioned to improve Federal retirement processing due to its integrated payroll/personnel system and large customer base. For more than 30 years, the Agency has worked collaboratively with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to carry out key services such as health insurance processing and payroll/personnel processing, including retirements. During 2023, NFC reconciled and certified payroll for more than 650, 000 employees, totaling 33,012,533 payments resulting in $97,142,985,473 (gross), Life Insurance/Health Benefits/Retirement payments totaling $24,140,545,819 processed 20,574 annuity retirement cases and 52,274 non-annuity cases processed.

The NFC team continues to implement improvements in the processing of retirement cases. In 2023, NFC began a successful partnership with the OPM to pilot OPM's internally developed Online Retirement Application (ORA). This initiative will allow annuitants to complete their retirement applications online via and OPM portal.

WebTA remains the most widely used and offered solution of NFC's portfolio of time and attendance solutions. In 2021, the vendor notified current providers of its plans to end support and engineering of its older solution and transition to the latest and current GovTA solution. The end of life and engineering notification put NFC on the fast path to find a solution for USDA and two of its largest customers, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Homeland Security. Project schedules support the implementation of DHS and DOJ by the end of calendar year (CY) 2023 into the first two months of CY 2024. USDA's implementation is scheduled for CY 2025.

Financial Management Support Services

Current Activities

The Financial Management Support Services (FMSS) provided financial management oversight, budget execution, and budget formulation services to Departmental Administration Staff Offices (DASO), Office of Partnership and Public Engagement (OPPE), OCIO, OCFO, OHS and OES in support of the Department's strategic goals. Administered fiscal resource management practices, including timely, accurate and effective high-quality financial advice, funds execution analysis and reconciliation, budget forecasting, resource planning, program spending analysis, and fiscal reporting to include monthly status of funds briefings.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

FMSS executed over $580 million in budget authority across program reimbursement, appropriated, shared cost programs, working capital, and no-year funding sources; obligated over $568 million with a 98 percent obligation rate. FMSS processed 8,736 Intra Agency Agreements (IAA) totaling over $164 million and approved budget authority for 679 contract awards totaling over $228 million. FMSS collected over $77 million in current year reimbursable program expenditures, at 93 percent. FMSS collected over $60 million in prior year reimbursable program expenditures and closed unliquidated obligations to include canceling year 2018.

FMSS executed $56 million in Department Grants for OPPE's Policy Center and Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers programs.

FMSS executed the A-123 Internal Controls requirements for User Access, Grants - awards, modifications, and closeout, IPAC Reconciliation, Unliquidated Obligations, and Reimbursements - authorizations, modifications, and closeout. FMSS completed assessment deliverables to include the Project Plan, Risk Assessments, Control Procedures, and Design Assessments, Operating Effectiveness Test Results, Aggregated Deficiencies/Findings, where applicable, closed Corrective Action Plans (CAPs), and completed the overall Certification Statement. These are the required Internal Controls processed by the Division for the areas noted. These are tested to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations. A-123 testing and assessing the internal controls and the certification statements assist the Department in completing the Annual Financial Reports (AFR).

Internal Control Support Services

Current Activities

Internal Control Support Services (ICSS) promotes and supports the USDA's internal control program by assisting USDA agencies in their internal control compliance efforts. As part of its services, ICSS plans and manages the Department's annual assessment of internal control over financial reporting and promotes best practices across the Department to gain consistencies and efficiencies related to internal control for financial processes, administrative processes, and information technology. ICSS provides training programs, group presentations, and other support services improve the Department's internal control program and to increase the Department's awareness of emerging events and current trends related to internal control.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

ICSS established target remediation and corrective action plans (CAPs) closure goals for the fiscal year. In 2023, ICSS had the target goal of 32 percent for CAPs to be closed, but ICSS achieved a CAP closure rate of 45 percent,

exceeding the established targets by 13 percent. By reducing the CAPs, the USDA remedied their deficiencies, which could be published in the AFR.

ICSS created standardized lease accounting internal controls for the A-123 assessment across the Department increasing transparency and standardization of internal controls across USDA.

ICSS made Compliance Audit Tracking and Reporting (CATR) System Updates to increase the speed with which the deliverables are processed and completed in the assessment year. The A-123 deliverables no longer have to be reviewed several times and sent back to the agency to correct because of the required fields in the deliverable.

ICSS provided the Assessment Year 2023 department-wide scoping recommendations based on deficiencies. These recommendations include the Financial Reporting, Charge Card Management, Data Act Reporting, updated the 5-Year and 3-Year Deficiency Trend by Business Cycle, and the Pervasiveness of Findings by Business Process 2018 – 2022, which are presented to Senior Management. If the recommended processes were not in scope for the Annual A-123 Assessment, it could have potentially led to material misstatements in the AFR if they were not assessed during the Annual A-123 Assessment based on the deficiencies in the process.

Information Technology

The following activities under this heading are managed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer:

Client Experience Center

Current Activities

The Client Experience Center (CEC) provides comprehensive information technology (IT) associated operations and technical support services to more than 100,000 customers throughout the USDA. These customers work in offices located across the United States, its territories and protectorates around the globe and are in more than 3,400 field, state and headquarters offices located across the United States, its territories, and protectorates. The number of customers grew in 2023 and will grow even more in 2024 and beyond.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The Application Rationalization project is evaluating USDA's 352,852 software installations to reduce IT costs and improve security, inventory accuracy, and customer experience. CEC is leading an Integrated Project Team to review every software product in use across 117,000 workstations and categorize them into similar groups. During 2023, the team mapped software to 34 application groups and identified USDA standard software for 22 of the groups. By fiscal year end, Application Rationalization's impact across the Department was significant: a 32 percent increase in standard software usage, a 29 percent decrease in the use of outdated software, and a 50 percent reduction in the use of software no longer supported by the vendor.

In line with feedback received during customer engagement listening sessions, CEC designed the Big 6 Dashboard to reduce the volume of metrics reports and the complexity of interpreting results. The Big 6 Dashboard gives customers more information on key metrics about CEC's performance, such as New Hire Onboarding and Customer Satisfaction. By focusing on the quality of metrics reported over quantity, the Big 6 Dashboard has greatly improved the customer experience around performance management.

In collaboration with Gartner, CEC developed a roadmap to simplify and standardize technologies and reduce the complexity of supporting USDA's environment. Using customer surveys and feedback in 2022, CEC identified 11 End-point Personas that share common technology and customer support requirements. This summer, CEC implemented End-point Personas to the 1,631 staff across OCIO. In September, CEC partnered with Mission Areas to establish End-point Personas liaisons before the Department-wide rollout in 2024.

Launched in November 2021, the CEC Enterprise Depot successfully transitioned 25 Mission Area Agencies and 16 Departmental Administration and Staff Offices by March 2023. The Depot has transformed a costly and labor-intensive process into a centralized, automated, standardized service for USDA laptops, desktops, and tablets. The Depot's assembly-line approach helped deliver impressive customer results during 2023, with 34,000 devices imaged and shipped and more than 35,000 customer returns processed.

The Depot's customers now can manage and assign inventory and track orders and requests based upon real-time information found on the newly converted website application called Approval portal. The QR Code Implementation on instructional inserts included with computer shipments allows customers direct access to YouTube presentations on completing a computer setup. The returns process will enable customers to return old computers seamlessly through the Depot when offboarding or receiving new computers through life-cycle refresh. This innovative partnership with MMSC continues to provide best-rate shipping, storage, and integrated computer excessing.

In November 2021, CEC embarked on an effort to find an alternative security and mobile device management solution for the expiring MobileIron contract affecting over 49 thousand USDA mobile devices. The chosen solution was Intune after a successful pilot completed in August 2022 and determined that Intune was the most cost-effective solution by leveraging the existing Microsoft Office 365 Licensing. Migrations of USDA mobile devices began immediately after the pilot and to date the team has migrated over 48,900 devices (99.7 percent) saving an estimated $2.1 million. With only a handful of remaining devices to be migrated, the MobileIron environment will shut down at the end of October 2023 and the project will closeout successfully with USDA customers realizing the measurable benefits of enhanced user experience, improved security, and significant cost savings.

The White House mandated the use of MFA because passwords have proven ineffective in protecting data and systems from cyberattacks. To comply with these mandates, USDA began the Zero-Trust MFA project, which includes deploying of alternate MFA credentials. The primary alternative MFA credential, "Windows Hello for Business" uses Microsoft technology built into Windows-based government furnished equipment. The MFA Project Team successfully registered more than 1,000 CEC Staff into the Pilot group to test the Window Hello for Business alternate authentication solution for the USDA. "How to…" video recordings, Knowledge-Based Articles and Technical Support Division support training have been completed as the project prepares for the final pilot phase, rolling out to mission area's agencies. The project effort remains on task to be completed at the end of the 2024 calendar year, providing additional access and connectivity with eAuth and eVPN. Once fully implemented, the project will significantly reduce the security vulnerabilities related to password phishing and theft, reduced overhead for password reset and recovery support and reduced more than 12,000 password exemptions with the USDA infrastructure. In addition, the GSA Login.gov service was implemented with eAuthentication to provide MFA for public citizen users. All new public users that need to register for eAuthentication are now redirected to create their accounts at Login.gov, which requires the use of MFA. Public users with exiting eAuth accounts have the option of linking Login.gov to their accounts and then are required to use Login.gov with MFA for all future logins. Over 30,000 eAuthentication accounts have been linked with Login.gov since the capability became available on September 11, 2023.

In 2023, CEC transitioned the remaining Mission Areas (Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, Farm Production and Conservation, Departmental Administration Offices, and Staff offices). CEC developed Centralized Mobility Support to offer faster and improved service delivery to mobility customers, deploying USDA mobile devices in less than an hour instead of several business days. With Centralized Mobility Support, CEC customers benefit from a streamlined ordering process, faster and more accurate device inventory, more timely processing of line disconnects with the wireless provider, and faster resolution of mobile device issues.

Departmental Administration Information Technology Office

Current Activities

DAITO provides centrally managed, value-added IT solutions to DASO to meet governing bodies and users' functionality, accessibility, and compliance requirements. DAITO ensures consolidated, streamlined, and comprehensive IT offerings to allow DASO to focus on its core mission and values through a suite of Investment Compliance, Security Compliance, Customer Service Compliance, and Service Delivery/Operations Support services.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The OHRM eRecruit Migration Project System/Data migration project has been 100 percent completed with success. The legacy system was decommissioned as per information security guidelines in September 2023. This effort shifted the out of security compliance legacy vendor-based system to USDA's in-house offered solution built on SharePoint. The OHRM program saved ongoing development, operations, maintenance (O&M), security

compliance, software and hosting, and costs related to the legacy system. The estimated saved dollar amount for the OHRM program is around $250 thousand per year.

OPEM needed to replace the old-fashioned and manual process of collecting and reporting USDA-wide Solid Waste and Recycling data associated with USDA owned facilities. This process used to be based on manually preparing and sending Excel spreadsheets to 180+ facilities, consolidating data, and reporting metrics. The DAITO DevOps team used in-house resources to build a digitized platform using the existing USDA SharePoint solution to replace the legacy manual process. This application is projected to save reporting USDA facility users and leads 70 percent of time compared to the legacy manual processes. The DAITO DevOps team chose USDA's existing enterprise-wide SharePoint platform to build this application, which is projected to save at least $200 thousand per year to the program compared to any commercial software procurement, development, and operations and maintenance.

DAITO established a DASONow Portal (DASO-wide ServiceNow based platform) as per the Forms Digitization and automation initiative. This initiative replaced manual and laborious legacy data collection and processing tasks/processes with more robust, digitized, and automated processes with cutting-edge technologies. This effort was targeted to save the level of effort (LOE), time, and costs normally associated with manual and legacy process applications to replace manual paper-based forms and information processing with digitized and robust information technologies for each mission area.

DAITO continued to improve the cybersecurity posture and aligned with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) and Executive Order (EO) 14028 - "Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity", by implementing MFA on 23 out of 25 FISMA reportable systems and not having expired ATO. The program granted 15 complete ATO/Authority to Use ATU applications within the DAITO scope. This effort allowed security compliance with relevant regulations such as the FISMA and the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP). In addition, the DAITO security completed – 28 Information System Contingency Plan (ISCP) and 38 Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP), which supports the program's Continuous Monitoring Assessment (CMA).

In a continuous effort to improve NFC cyber health, DAITO implemented and assessed security controls for two of NFC's main applications, Government Time and Attendance (GovTA) and EmpowHR, which will reduce the risk of the systems being compromised. DAITO also brought in an external Red Team to perform a penetration assessment of the NFC website application to evaluate the NFC application's security posture. The assessment found weaknesses ranging from critical to low. These vulnerabilities could have placed the NFC in a vulnerable state, and bad actors could have unleashed various attacks or actions, ransomware, including reading or modifying critical applications; however, the action taken by OCIO and OCFO remediated the weakness.

DAITO maintained the Enterprise Web Application Platform (eWAPS) platform's high security and availability with 99.9 percent uptime for 20+ websites throughout the year. They were continually improving the system security by upgrading Staging and Production Rancher from k3s to RKE2. The Agency implemented a more robust website database backup every three hours 24/7 to prevent data loss due to network or Domain Name System (DNS) connectivity issues.

Digital Infrastructure Services

Current Activities

The Digital Infrastructure Services (DISC) office is a departmental turnkey solution provider with cloud hosting and application development services. The technologies available today from DISC Enterprise Hosting Solutions (EHS) allow government users access business delivery applications on a 24/7 basis using a hybrid cloud architecture connecting the USDA on-premises enterprise data centers with the commercial cloud. The EHS assures the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all applications and data via supported cloud architectures. EHS cloud architectures enable access from customer locations throughout the United States via secure private and public networks that support their business requirements and service needs.

The EHS Cloud Platforms include Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Professional Services (PS). These services, as defined by the DISC Service Catalog, are developed, and managed using the industry standard Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) v4 Service Management Framework and are secured to align with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) 800-53, FedRAMP Moderate, FISMA High, and Department of Defense (DoD) Impact Level 4 security controls.

Enterprise Applications Services (EAS) provides enterprise applications development and support to USDA and its partner agencies and has been doing so for nearly 40 years. EAS offers a full spectrum of professional services to custom build, launch, and support world-class business applications. EAS supports application development on numerous Software as a Service (SaaS) technologies such as Salesforce, SharePoint, Oracle, Java, .Net and Drupal. A Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) methodology provides flexibilities to meet customer needs and provide quicker product delivery. EAS streamlines these services to provide a direct and efficient resource for customers throughout the DevSecOps lifecycle.

As part of EAS, the Digital Service Center (DSC) group establishes and manages the enterprise processes, resources, tools, and best practices for Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms at the USDA to include Salesforce, ServiceNow, MuleSoft, and Akamai. Managed platform services include Enterprise Management, Business & Technology Support, Release & Configuration Management, Operations & Maintenance, Platform Management Services, and Security.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The St. Louis Data Center migration was completed in November 2022 on-time, on-budget, and without service disruption including two successful disaster recovery tests of all systems including midrange and mainframe system. Chicago data center contract expenses were managed and moved towards steady state operations of less than $3 million per year. DISC Reduced overall labor from 18 individuals on contract to six resources in Chicago to achieve a $940 thousand cost savings/avoidance as the program moved into Operations and Maintenance operations.

DISC further transformed the Kansas City enterprise data center in 2023 by modernizing electrical systems, updating air handlers, and decommissioning an older air chiller farm all with zero downtime to the USDA's enterprise data center. The transformation this year has allowed DISC to achieve a significantly improved Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) of 1.5 in Kansas City, accounting for a reduction in 295,039 kWh of energy and a cost reduction of $14 thousand. This represents a significant improvement over 2022's PUE rating of 1.60 and contributing to the department's strategic goal to combat climate change by reducing energy usage. Furthermore, their robust redundancy measures have allowed them to achieve an impressive 100 percent reliability rate, further enhancing their operational excellence.

DISC successfully returned all 3rd floor office spaces at 8930 Ward Parkway to GSA resulting in a substantial cost savings for the DISC organization. DISC has achieved annual savings of $500 thousand/year and over the remaining three years of the building lease this strategic move is expected to yield a total savings of $1.5 million.

Analysis of alternative documentation was completed with a recommendation for a hybrid solution leveraging a commercial colocation data center with connectivity to commercial clouds for burstable managed services. A high-level summary plan including a timeline and budget was presented to leadership and the Deputy Secretary. The identified approach utilizes valuable lessons from the successful DISC Goodfellow data center migration from St. Louis to Chicago. The migration of Kansas City is an opportunity that will allow DISC to transform the way data centers are utilized both technically and financially by USDA and non-USDA customers to consume their full capabilities and not just utilize them as disaster or primary facilities.

Through effective communication and collaboration, DISC engaged cross-functional teams focusing on automation initiatives. DISC collectively saved $3 million year after completing automation projects in 2023 including the reduction of $1.2 million in redundant or unnecessary software licenses such as BMC BladeLogic, leading to cost savings and improved software asset management. In addition to the $3 million/year identified above, using automation DISC was able to correct a storage backup billing issue that will result in additional revenues of $2 million year in 2024.

DISC successfully achieved FEMA Cloud Enclave (FCE) ATO 200 percent faster (in 6 months) than the FEMA average. They reduced annual spend by 65 percent, 50 percent less start-up costs and time through reusable code also known as infrastructure as code (IAC), 85 percent reduction in infrastructure provisioning time via 93 new pipelines. Saved over 150-hour annual maintenance, 90 percent reuse of IAC for baseline (Virtual Machine Images, User Federation, and Identity and Access Management (IAM) policies). Their effort won them the Google Cloud 2023 Government Customer award.

Enterprise Cybersecurity Services

Current Activities

Enterprise Cybersecurity Service (ECS) provides enterprise cybersecurity services that protect the Department of Agriculture's information systems, services, data, and privacy. ECS systems and services identify, protect, detect, respond, and recover from cyber risks, vulnerabilities, and incidents. ECS cybersecurity operations are mandated and governed by Federal regulations and directives such as Executive Orders, Office of Management and Budget, Department of Homeland Security, National Security Council, and National Institute of Standards and Technology. ECS Security Operations Center (SOC) services comply with the cybersecurity framework and ensure the Department's ability to identify, protect, detect, respond, and recover from cyber risks, vulnerabilities, and incidents.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The Goodfellow Data Center move was a major relocation project initially scheduled to be executed over multiple years. However, an aggressive time constraint required the Cyber Security Infrastructure Division (CSID) to complete the move in less than a year. All cybersecurity infrastructure operations remained in place, and legacy assets were decommissioned, thereby reducing the attack surface of the USDA enterprise environment and reducing operational costs.

Cybersecurity engineering reallocated hardware resources to the Chicago data center after retiring a legacy SOC application. This reallocation addressed disaster recovery gaps and simultaneously avoided costs by repurposing equipment.

The USDA reported 1,715 cybersecurity incidents to the Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Upon investigation, the Cybersecurity and Privacy Operations Center (CPOC) mapped the attackers' path to understand strengths and weaknesses and provide after-action reports to affected Mission Areas. The data is further used to identify early indicators of attacks, which afford analysts time to proactively escalate, investigate, and remediate future risks.

The USDA CPOC provided 52 Cyber Threat Reports and 39 Quarterly and weekly Intelligence Reports to Mission Areas to mitigate threats and to provide awareness and education.

Enterprise Data and Analytic Services

Current Activities

The Enterprise Data and Analytics Services (EDAS) provides an enterprise data and analytics platform and toolset that brings together data from across the organization into a common environment for rapid data access, analytics, and reporting. This service will unlock the strategic value of data, deliver solutions for analytics priorities of the department and administration, support an enterprise data warehouse for all agency data, provide advanced analytics capabilities, enable the analytics workforce with data and tools to do their work more effectively and support the data governance needs to ensure that USDA data is well described, high quality and useful to USDA and the public.

The Enterprise Data Management Center (EDMC) represents the hub of USDA's data program. The Chief Data Officer's vision is to realize the full potential of USDA's data and workforce to make better decisions, maximize the impact of citizen-facing programs, and provide the public with easier access to data that can solve national problems and spark innovation.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

The EDMC staff refreshed the USDA Data Strategy for 2024 – 2026. The new data strategy will provide strategic direction for USDA on topics such as the data workforce, data governance and leadership, data infrastructure, open data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance. The data strategy was drafted with input from multiple stakeholders across USDA and aligned to the Information Technology (IT) Strategic Plan and USDA Strategic Plan.

The EDMC team developed initial guidance for Generative AI governance at USDA. The guidance balanced risk with innovation on a promising yet potentially risky emerging technology. It set up a process for reporting requirements for USDA-wide Artificial Intelligence use case inventory, collected, and reported to OMB and the public, ensuring compliance with relevant Executive Orders and OMB guidance while still promoting innovation across USDA.

EDAS made technological and business enhancements to the Enterprise Data Analytics Platform and Toolset (EDAPT) by expanding interactive data visualizations to be accessible to anyone in USDA, enabling greater ease of data sharing. They continued efforts to catalog data assets across USDA in the USDA Data Catalog, providing visibility of data assets and promoting reuse across the Department, ultimately reducing data duplication and storage. EDMC launched the first EDAPT office hours and expanded other topic-specific office hours to provide information on the platform. EDAS conducted the annual Pulse Survey and identified areas of success and opportunities for improvement. They expanded the use of EDAPT's Open Data Platform, providing more agencies the ability to share data visualizations with the public, such as the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Data Visualization page that included Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program data.

The EDMC team expanded partnerships across USDA to strengthen the data program. EDAS partnered with USDA Chief Technology Officer and Executive Director of USDA Digital Service to partner on several initiatives, such as stronger vendor management and direction in alignment with the USDA IT and Data Strategy, coordination with the USDA Cloud Working Group, prioritizing a joint Innovation Lab for artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, and data and IT workforce hiring initiatives such as participation in IT and data workforce hiring fairs and cross-government hiring activities for data and IT positions. EDAS also partnered with the Deputy Performance Improvement Officer (DPIO) to find ways to bring the data and performance work closer together in the spirit of Evidence Act coordination, resulting in data leadership representation and data preparation for revamped Quarterly Strategic Reviews with the USDA Deputy Secretary.

Enterprise Network Services

Current Activities

The Enterprise Network Services (ENS) provides Department-wide telecommunications management support and various enterprise services, in addition to an integrated information system for inventory management, billing, reporting, and validation. This enterprise system is used for engineering and streamlining the Department-wide telecommunications network environment and ensuring that agency telecommunications network solutions comply with Departmental program goals and objectives. ENS provides services to all USDA agencies to ensure the acceptable performance of applications on the USDA enterprise network, network access to the public Internet network and partner networks for mission delivery, and to allow application owners to manage risk and achieve cost avoidance.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

USDA's OCIO appointed a team to manage and award the USDA Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) task order known as USDANet. USDANet will modernize and transform USDA's entire wide-area network (WAN) service into a fully integrated network and cybersecurity service that is vendor- owned, operated, and managed under strong, centralized USDA oversight. Based on government and industry- developed cost savings estimates, USDANet will conservatively reduce USDA's WAN expenditures by $571 million over the life of the General Services Administration (GSA) EIS Contract. Looking forward, USDA will partner with its EIS vendor partner to ensure that USDANet remains state-of-the-art and cost effective.

ENS EIS team awarded an EIS task order to Lumen to achieve USDA Network Modernization through the reduction of 17 networks to one, repurposing up to 200 mission area network staff, and elimination of redundant USDA-owned networking equipment resulting in $734 million in cost savings/avoidance. Through this award, ENS will provide centrally billed and distributed services to mission areas for trusted internet access, remote access services, domain name service, Unified Telecommunications Network (UTN) gateways, cloud carrier service, and integrated network and security operations.

ENS engaged mission areas and conducted five transition team sessions with 100 percent participation to review core USDANet services and prioritize Phase 1 orders. Service orders for the new Chicago data center (Goodfellow replacement) backhaul circuits, UTN/USDANet gateway routers, and 499 site service delivery points were prepared and sent to Lumen, but supply chain issues delayed delivery. DISC applied for and received a Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS) priority rating authorization which should accelerate the delivery of critical network infrastructure and the goal is to complete 80 percent of existing sites to the EIS contract by the end of 2024.

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