



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for providing nutrition assistance to low-income Americans and a safety net for the farm sector, conserving and preserving private agricultural lands, and sustaining the health and productivity of the Nation's forests. The President's 2025 Budget for USDA: sustains America's advantages in agriculture; strengthens the nutrition safety net and removes barriers to vital assistance; promotes job growth and economic opportunity in rural communities, including more jobs in clean energy to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; promotes environmental justice; supports historically disadvantaged and underserved producers; and helps farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners adapt to the effects of the climate crisis.

The Budget requests \$29.2 billion in discretionary budget authority for 2025, a \$2 billion or 7.4-percent increase from the 2023 level, excluding Food for Peace Title II Grants, which are included in the State and International Programs total. Resources provided through the 2025 Budget complement investments in natural resource conservation, national forest and wildland fire management, and broadband deployment provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

The President's 2025 Budget:

- **Lowers Energy Costs and Catalyzes Clean Energy and Economic Growth in Rural Communities.** The Budget builds on the \$13 billion provided in the President's historic Inflation Reduction Act for rural development programs at USDA to reduce energy bills for families, expand clean energy, transform rural power production, and create thousands of good-paying jobs for people across rural America. Rural communities are critical to achieving the goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2035. The Budget provides \$1 billion for loan guarantees for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements for farmers and rural small businesses, and \$6.5 billion in authority for rural electric loans to support additional clean energy, energy storage, and transmission projects that would create good-paying jobs. In addition, the Budget includes \$53 million in zero-interest loans for the Rural Energy Savings Program, which would help rural Americans implement durable cost-effective energy efficiency measures in their homes, which lowers energy costs and contributes to the President's clean energy goals and the Justice40 Initiative. The Budget also provides \$10 million in Rural Community Facilities Grants specifically for rural communities making an energy transition away from outdated energy sources, facilitating emerging infrastructure needs.
- **Connects More Rural Americans to High-Speed, Affordable, and Reliable Internet.** The President is committed to ensuring that every American has access to affordable broadband internet—and thanks to his Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, under the Biden-Harris

Administration, USDA has provided \$2.3 billion to people living and working across 35 States and Territories, which is expected to expand broadband access to more than 137,000 households. Installing high-speed internet creates high-paying union jobs and strengthens rural economies, which leads to higher property values, increased job and population growth, lower unemployment rates, and new business formation. Reliable internet is also crucial for rural Americans to access healthcare services through telehealth. Building on the \$2 billion for USDA broadband programs provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for 2023, the Budget provides \$112 million for the ReConnect program, which provides grants and loans to deploy broadband to unserved areas, especially tribal areas.

- **Increases Climate Resilience and Other Conservation Practices in Agriculture Production.** Climate change presents real threats to U.S. agricultural production, forest resources, and rural communities. The Budget provides \$6 billion for climate-related funding, a \$733 million increase over the 2023 enacted level, and \$1.3 billion over the 2020 enacted level. This funding includes \$985 million for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a \$67 million or 7-percent increase above the 2023 enacted level, and a \$152 million increase or 18-percent above the 2020 enacted level, to assist farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners with production goals in the face of a changing climate while conserving, maintaining, and restoring natural resources on their lands. The Inflation Reduction Act provided generational investments to increase adoption of voluntary conservation practices that sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions associated with farming and ranching operations. Increasing conservation in agricultural production supports voluntary environmental services markets, leverages private-sector and other non-Federal investment, and provides additional income opportunities for America's farmers. These practices also help producers adapt to multi-year drought conditions and reductions in water availability. To implement Inflation Reduction Act investments, the NRCS would hire thousands of employees—creating good-paying jobs throughout rural America.
- **Supports a Strong Nutrition Safety Net.** The Budget provides \$8.5 billion for critical nutrition programs, including \$7.7 billion to fully fund participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which is critical to the health of pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and young children. This program helps low-income families put nutritious food on the table and addresses racial disparities in maternal and child health outcomes. In the *Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health*, the Administration set goals to help more individuals experiencing food insecurity access Federal nutrition assistance programs. By investing in outreach and modernization, WIC would reach 800,000 more women, infants, and children each month, providing vital nutrition assistance to nearly seven million individuals, up from 6.2 million in 2021. The Budget supports enhanced benefits for fruits and vegetables to improve nutritional outcomes and reduce food insecurity among children consistent with the recommendations by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. In addition, the Budget includes an emergency contingency fund that would provide additional resources, beyond the \$7.7 billion, when there are unanticipated cost pressures. The Budget also includes \$15 billion over 10 years to allow more States and schools to leverage participation in the Community Eligibility Provision to provide healthy school meals at no cost to an additional nine million children.
- **Invests in America's Brave Wildland Firefighters.** The Budget builds on the Administration's historic investments in the wildland firefighting workforce at the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior, including investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, by supporting implementation of permanent and comprehensive pay reform,

enhancement of health services, hiring of additional permanent and temporary wildland firefighters to increase capacity, and improvement of Government housing. These investments, totaling \$387 million over the comparable 2023 enacted level for USDA Forest Service, would help address long-standing recruitment and retention challenges, increase the Departments' capacity to complete critical risk mitigation work, and further the Administration's commitment to build a more robust and resilient wildland firefighting workforce as the frequency and intensity of catastrophic wildfires continue to increase due to climate change.

- **Reduces Housing Insecurity and Strengthens Climate Resiliency in Rural Communities.** Adequate affordable housing has been a long-standing problem in rural communities—one that is exacerbated by low energy efficiency of the aging housing stock, meaning higher costs to families. To help address this, the Budget proposes additional funding for rental assistance, multifamily and single-family housing, and again proposes to eliminate the existing low-income borrower penalty that requires individuals to repay subsidy costs for Single-Family Direct loans—a requirement that only exists for rural housing. The Budget provides strong support for USDA's multifamily housing and housing preservation programs. Through these investments, the Administration advances equity in support of underserved communities by reducing rent burdens for low-income borrowers and preserving low-income tenant-based housing in rural America. The Budget again proposes to increase the resiliency of rural housing to the impacts of climate change through a proposal to require energy and water efficiency improvements and green features in USDA's rural housing programs that include construction.
- **Sustains American Leadership in Agricultural Innovation and Research.** The Budget sustains American innovation in agriculture by providing a total of almost \$3.8 billion for agricultural research, education, and outreach. This includes \$365 million, a 20-percent increase above the 2023 enacted level, for agriculture research, extension, and education grants to minority-serving land grant universities and tribal colleges to increase the productive capacity of small family farms and historically underserved populations, including the responsible application of artificial intelligence to ensure that the entire spectrum of the agriculture sector can reap the economic benefits of this technology. The Budget also includes support for the duties of a Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer, who would promote the safe and responsible application of artificial intelligence in advancing the productivity of the Nation's agriculture sector. The Budget provides \$321 million for the Department's core climate-related research and development (R&D) activities, which includes R&D on the carbon cycle and the impacts of weather and water cycle variations on soil, air, and water resources associated with agriculture. This would help to quantify risks and benefits to agriculture from global change so technologies can be developed for harnessing beneficial aspects of global change, adapting agricultural systems to change, and mitigating the Nation's net emissions of GHG.
- **Provides Trade and International Food Security.** America's farmers, ranchers, and producers are feeding the world. The Budget provides funding to fully staff the Foreign Agricultural Service, which supports the marketing and promotion of high-quality, high-value U.S. agricultural products to a variety of overseas markets, creating jobs and income streams throughout the supply chain domestically and internationally. Further, the Budget allows for USDA to engage in international trade and regulatory systems and agreements, creating new markets and ensuring current markets stay open. In addition, the Budget provides food assistance, such as \$243 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. Lastly, capacity building projects, supported by the Budget, combat global food insecurity, share knowledge around climate-smart agricultural practices, and develop rules- and science-based markets.

- **Supports Better Delivery of Services to Rural America and the Nation's Farmers.** To better serve rural communities and areas that have been previously left behind, the Budget provides funding for USDA to ensure adequate staffing and critical information technology upgrades to improve program delivery. This includes expanding the authority for the Non-recurring Expenses Fund to access expired discretionary funds for projects that would remediate cybersecurity vulnerabilities and improve web-based rural development loan services to provide a more automated experience for borrowers. To make sure that eligible individuals are aware of available Federal support, regardless of their native language, the Budget provides \$2 million for a Department-wide Language Access Plan. To expand rural prosperity and economic growth, the Budget includes \$10 million for the Rural Partners Network, which continues the collaboration and outreach of 20 Federal agencies and regional commissions to ensure rural communities have equitable access to Federal programs.
- **Supports the Upcoming Farm Bill.** The Budget provides USDA with the staffing resources necessary to seamlessly implement reauthorization of the Farm Bill. The Administration looks forward to working this year with the Congress, partners, stakeholders, and the public to identify shared priorities and build on the historic legislative achievements of the first three years of the Administration. The Farm Bill presents a unique opportunity to transform the food and agricultural system from one that benefits a few to one that benefits many—all while strengthening USDA's nutrition programs, which are among the most effective and far-reaching tools available to improve the health and well-being of Americans. The Nation can achieve meaningful, equitable growth in agriculture and rural economies by creating new revenue streams for American farmers, ranchers, and producers of all sizes through climate smart agriculture and forestry, biobased products, renewable energy, local and regional food systems, increased competition in agricultural markets, and other value-added opportunities, while reducing the paperwork burden for Federal programs and achieving best in Government practices. The Farm Bill is also a critical opportunity to ensure that the wealth created in rural America stays there to empower rural communities with the tools necessary to advance their locally-led vision.

The upcoming Farm Bill is also an opportunity to make progress toward ensuring that all Americans have access to healthy, affordable food, as emphasized in the *Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health*. This is an important moment to protect food assistance benefits that reflect the true cost of a basic, healthy diet, strengthen cross enrollment capabilities across Federal assistance programs, and eliminate barriers to food assistance for vulnerable groups. These barriers make it difficult for underserved groups to succeed, including low-income college students, individuals reentering society and seeking a second chance, youth who have aged out of foster care, kinship families, low-income individuals in the U.S. Territories, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients facing time limits. Rather than reducing obstacles to employment, research demonstrates that time limits on SNAP eligibility amplify existing inequities in food and economic security. Beyond removing barriers to food access, there is also the opportunity to make healthier choices easier by expanding food purchasing options, fruit and vegetable incentives, and local food procurement through Federal nutrition programs, including by building upon efforts already plotted by USDA. The Farm Bill reauthorization process is an opportunity to strengthen program integrity to address new risks and vulnerabilities while ensuring that USDA can continue to support the needs of all eligible households.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to: support new and beginning farmers; shore up the Federal Government's commitment to agricultural research; address climate change by protecting and enhancing investments in conservation, climate-smart

agriculture and forestry, and clean energy; strengthen local and regional food supply chains; continue efforts on reducing food loss and waste; support competition by increasing transparency and continuing to support small and independent processors; open new market opportunities and provide a competitive advantage for American producers—including small and historically underserved producers and early adopters. In addition, the Administration supports improvements to crop insurance, proactively managing risk from natural hazards, including the permanent authorization of the cover crop incentive program. These Administration priorities can help create a stronger safety net and better markets for consumers and producers of U.S. agricultural products through the Farm Bill, which is one piece of the puzzle for how USDA helps people across America and the globe.

