

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues, based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. USDA provides economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; promotes agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and preserves our Nation's natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

BUILDING ON USDA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **INVESTING IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** USDA's Rural Development increased its investments in Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau by \$87.4 million. Of the total overall investments in Hawaii, approximately 65% support single family housing, 25% support critical infrastructure such as electric, water, wastewater, broadband, and community facilities, and 10% support businesses and multi-family housing.
- **SUPPORTING FARMERS AND PRODUCERS IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES:** In October 2022, USDA announced a more than \$71 million investment to help farmers and producers in underserved communities. These grants are funding partnerships with nonprofit and community-based organizations to provide technical assistance and training, including, for example, projects:

 - To offer training, education, outreach, and language services to Thai and Mandarin speaking farmers.
 - To provide Asian-language-accessible support services related to Natural Resources Conservation Service programs.
 - To assist farmers in Hawaii and Micronesia with training and technical outreach in aquaculture techniques.
 - To deliver customized language-accessible information and resources aimed at refugees and beginning farmers with limited English proficiency, arriving from, among other countries, Bhutan.
 - To provide culturally informed technical assistance to Hmong and Southeast Asian migrant and refugee farmers.
 - To build agricultural networks among Hmong, Burmese, and Afghan immigrants interested in farming.

- **ADVANCING EQUITABLE DATA AND RESEARCH EFFORTS:** USDA's Census of Agriculture revised the demographic data collected to better capture the contributions of all persons involved in agricultural production. AA and NHPI demographic data is disaggregated for surveys distributed in the state of Hawaii.
- **DEVELOPING AND DIVERSIFYING USDA'S TALENT PIPELINES:** USDA established a partnership with the Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholars organization and funded an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Scholarship program. In addition, USDA has relevant employee resource groups, such as the Asian Pacific American Network in Agriculture. And USDA's Forest Service has an active employee group, the Asian Pacific American Employee Association, whose mission is to elevate the voices of the AA and NHPI workforce and be an added resource to the Forest Service.

PRIORITY PROGRAM GOALS FOR THE ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

Per Executive Order 14031, USDA has identified three high-priority goals that will span the next two years. These goals will advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities.

GOAL 1

Continue to improve language access for AA and NHPIs by providing translation and interpretation services for USDA programs and services: USDA will provide meaningful access to its programs and services—online, over the phone, and in-person—and ensure every agency develops, budgets, and provides appropriate language access services. This includes identifying which languages require translation and periodically refining USDA Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plans and budgets. Moreover, staff will be trained on tools and policies related to interpretation and translation, cultural sensitivity, and civil rights.

GOAL 2

Expand AA and NHPI survey participation: The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the producers who operate them. Prior to the USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture data collection period, USDA performed targeted outreach to increase participation of the AA and NHPI community by working with community-based leaders and organizations and creating translated materials when needed. USDA will also evaluate surveys and other methods to better utilize disaggregated data internally to support program administration and outreach.

GOAL 3

Sustain a diverse workforce and support AA and NHPI employees: USDA will hire and integrate a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and implement its new diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) strategy, which incorporates best practices and standard guidance related to recruitment, hiring, and retention. By refocusing on DEIA, USDA will ensure that job applicant pools more fully reflect the rich diversity of the U.S., and that we achieve a workforce that is representative of Americans and best situated to develop innovative ideas and best practices. USDA will work to ensure that AA and NHPI employees are supported, given the tools needed to be successful, and encouraged to contribute their ideas and perspectives to tackle challenges at USDA.