USDA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN
FY 23-26

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USDA
MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Mission

To serve all Americans by providing effective, innovative, science-based public policy leadership in agriculture, food and nutrition, natural resources protection and management, rural development, and related issues with a commitment to deliverable equitable and climate-smart opportunities that inspire and help America thrive.

Vision

An equitable and climate-smart food and agriculture economy that protects and improves the health, nutrition, and quality of life of all Americans; yields healthy land, forests, and clean water; helps rural Americans thrive; and feeds the world.

Core Values

Respect and Dignity | Equity and Inclusion | Trust and Integrity | Service and Results | Science Leadership

USDA IT
## MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Mission

Enable the USDA mission through innovative, secure, and cost-effective IT solutions and services.

Vision

Implement a customer first model leveraging technologies that provide for simple, seamless, and secure digital services and offers a world class experience for the American public.

Core Values

- Customer-First Experience: Design and deliver IT solutions around a Digital Enterprise Model that puts the needs of customers at the forefront of innovation, security, and modernization.

- Innovative: Foster innovation and adoption of new technologies.

- Quality and Availability of Data and Information: Enhance the quality, availability, and delivery of data and information through curation and stewardship throughout the life cycle.

- Efficiency: Increase efficiency, transparency, and accountability of IT.

- Value: Provide business value to all users and stakeholders.
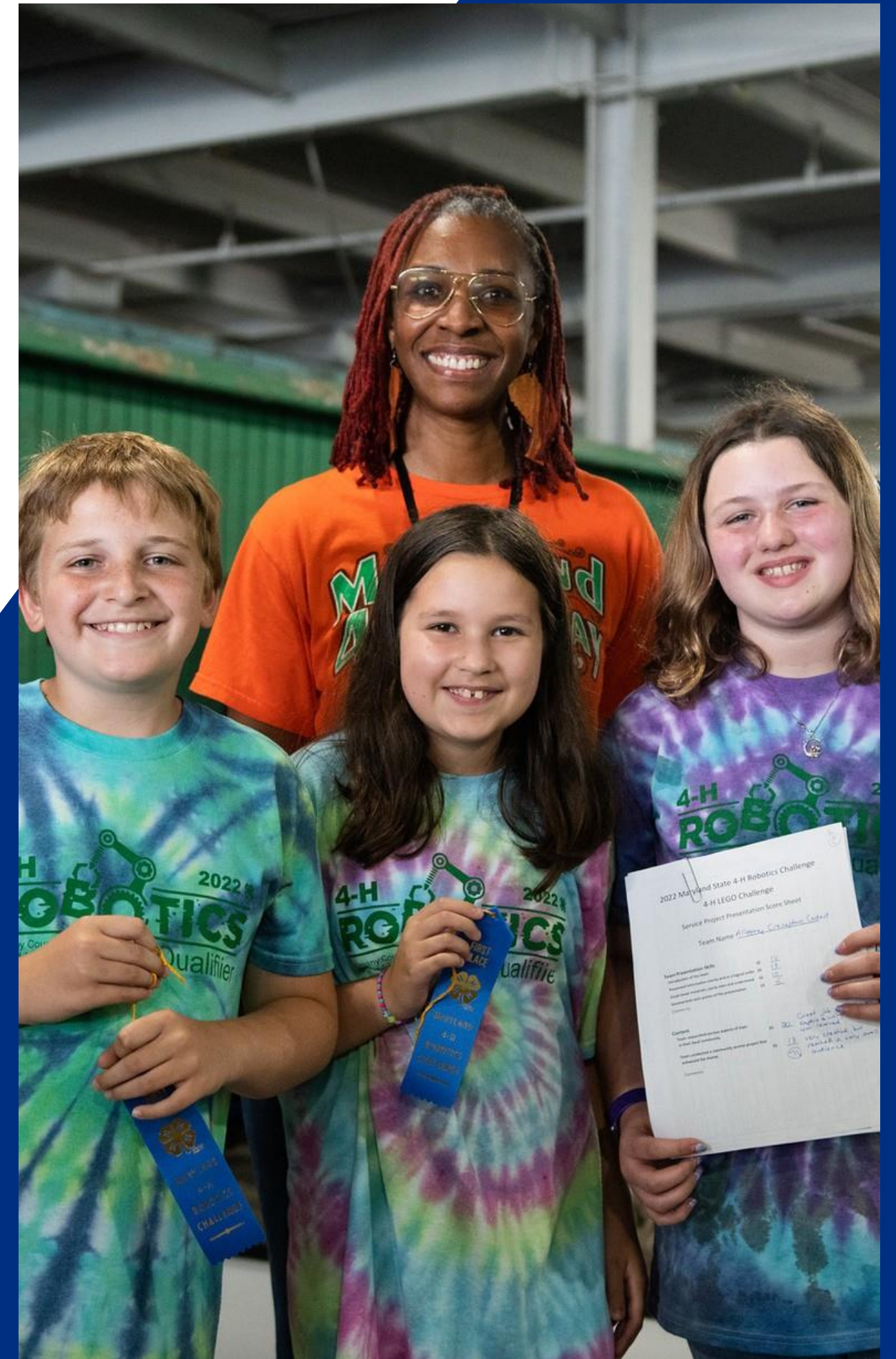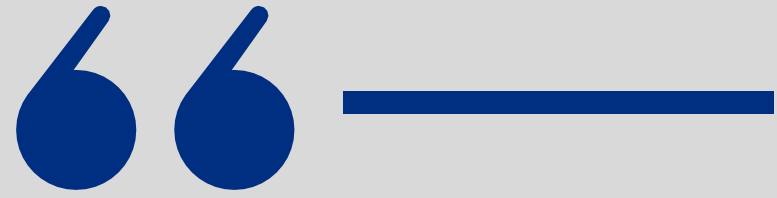
"USDA seeks to be the federal leader in **customer-centered, data-driven** service delivery. To accomplish this, we **must continue to advance our IT Workforce** to be better prepared to adapt to technology advancements **supporting mission delivery and superior customer service** across USDA."

Gary Washington
Chief Information Officer
U.S. Department of Agriculture

> **"Restoring USDA to an organization that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve** will require **intentional**, **thoughtful**, and **forward-thinking actions** from strategic business partners in and outside of the Department."

L'Tonya Davis
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
U.S. Department of Agriculture
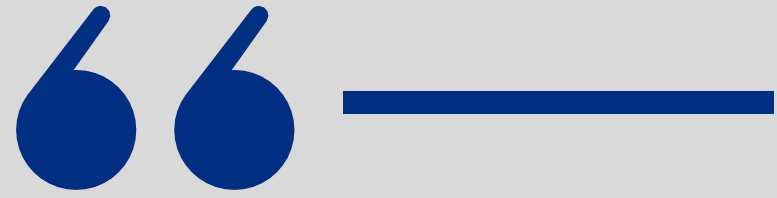
"Processes used to mature and manage the workforce must be **integrated into agency planning** and management processes, remain current with research and best practices, allow for **proactive responses to anticipated environmental changes**, and seek to continuously maximize the **efficiency and effectiveness of human resource service delivery**."

Anita Adkins
Chief Human Capital Officer
U.S. Department of Agriculture

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FEDERAL DIRECTIVES INFORMING IT WORKFORCE GOALS

Presidential Management Agenda

USDA Strategic Plan

USDA IT Strategic Plan

USDA IT Workforce Strategic Plan

Strategic Priorities

Develop a skilled and agile workforce prepared to meet customer needs and the future of technology.	Build resilient systems and practices capable of adapting to fluctuating organizational staffing and technology needs.	Create an omni-connected workplace where employees feel engaged and valued.

Action Plans

• Cyclical Competency Assessments • Create Training Opportunities • Incentivizing Future Tech Skills and Certifications	• Targeted Recruitment and Outreach • Incorporate SMEs into Key Stages of the Hiring Process • Creating Diversified Recruiting Strategies and Succession Plans	• Conduct Culture and Value Assessment • Promote Achievements and Opportunities • Expand Use of Employee Feedback Forums and Systems

Develop a skilled and agile workforce prepared to meet customer needs through leveraging the future of technology.

ACTION PLANS

Cyclical Competency Assessments

Establish a competency assessment process that recurs regularly, so stakeholders have up-to-date data on current skill gaps and areas for improvement.

Create Training Opportunities

Create formalized training paths and leverage an IT-training Blanket Purchase Agreement to provide cost-efficient training opportunities for employees.

Incentivizing Future Tech Skills and Certifications

Recognize individuals who have gone out of their way to acquire an understanding of and or certifications in emerging technologies that advance the USDA mission.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

USDA will have a more skilled and efficient IT workforce with an enhanced capacity for agile and adaptable customer service across the IT landscape, reflected in assessment and survey findings related to skill levels and customer service.

The Why

Technological advancements are seemingly made everyday. If USDA wishes to continue to provide excellent customer service, including service offerings reflecting the technology of today, it is imperative that USDA's IT Workforce possess the skills and knowledge associated to these emerging technologies in order to meet the customer needs of today and tomorrow.

Build resilient systems and practices capable of adapting to fluctuating organizational staffing and technology needs.

ACTION PLANS

Targeted Recruitment and Outreach

Establish or strengthen partnerships with academic, professional, and veteran organizations that allow USDA IT to showcase the benefits of Federal IT employment to recruit the best talent available.

Incorporate SMEs into Key Stages of the Hiring Process

Enable Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to more effectively contribute to hiring criteria that improve Human Resources efficiencies and supply USDA with as many qualified candidates as possible.

Creating Diversified Recruiting Strategies and Succession Plans

Create insightful recruiting strategies, succession plans, and offboarding policies customized to each Mission Area's unique organizational structure and challenges.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

USDA will have improved recruitment and succession plans in place within each Mission Area that will attract and efficiently evaluate IT workforce candidates leading to a more adaptable and diverse IT workforce.

The Why

The National IT Workforce landscape is more volatile now than it ever has been. USDA must evolve its recruiting, hiring, and succession planning practices in order to attract and retain a durable, skilled, and diverse workforce. While differences in pay compared to private industry may not be able to be overcome, tapping into value, purpose and mission driven approaches will elevate USDA's prospects for tackling the staffing challenges of tomorrow.

Create an omni-connected workplace where employees feel engaged and valued.

ACTION PLANS

Conduct Culture and Value Assessment

Conduct an assessment of how well specific USDA IT culture initiatives are performing and what other strategies should be considered in light of employee perspectives.

Promote Achievements and Opportunities

Recognize and announce progressions in personal development and the broader success of the organization.

Expand Use of Employee Feedback Forums and Systems

Mature the forums and systems in place in which managers and their employees openly provide feedback on how the other can help them continue to grow and succeed in their respective roles.

The Why

The ways in which we work together have dramatically changed in recent years, creating new opportunities across all aspects of our workforce. These changes must be met with new practices to bring employees together to increase workforce connectedness and create a thriving culture empowering each employee.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

USDA will experience an improved Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) index score as employees experience an inclusive work environment where they feel more connected, a deeper sense of belonging and where their opinions and ideas are cherished, empowering them to further advance the overall USDA mission and their individual careers within USDA.

IT Workforce Metrics	USDA IT Workforce Action Plans								
	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3
Competency Scores Average or distribution of scores on competencies relevant for IT roles	★	★	★					★	
Training Funding Percentage use of available funding dedicated to IT Workforce training	★	★	★						
Training Participation Rate Percentage of IT Workforce participating in voluntary training	★	★	★					★	
Targeted Recruitment Outreach Percentage change in applicants following recruitment and outreach events			★	★	★	★			
Internships and Career Opportunities Number and retention rate of IT-workforce participants from internships and similar career opportunities				★		★			
Succession/Recruiting Plans Percent of Organization with Succession/Recruiting Plans			★	★		★			
Category Employee Turnover Distribution Percentage of people leaving the organization in specific demographics (e.g., ERI, gender, generational, etc.)		★	★			★	★	★	★
Average IT Workforce Turnover Percentage Percentage of people leaving the organization (voluntary or involuntary)		★	★			★	★	★	★
Employee Engagement Scores Percentage change in FEVS Index and Culture and Values Assessment scores	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★

Priority 1: Develop a skilled and agile workforce prepared to meet customer needs through leveraging the future of technology.
- **1.1** Cyclical Competency Assessments
- **1.2** Create Training Opportunities
- **1.3** Incentivizing Future Tech Skills and Certifications

Priority 2: Build resilient systems and practices capable of adapting to fluctuating organizational staffing and technology needs.
- **2.1** Targeted Recruitment and Outreach
- **2.2** Incorporate SMEs into Key Stages of the Hiring Process
- **2.3** Creating Diversified Recruiting Strategies and Succession Plans

Priority 3: Create an omni-connected workplace where employees feel engaged and valued.
- **3.1** Conduct Culture and Value Assessment
- **3.2** Promote Achievements and Opportunities
- **3.3** Expand Use of Employee Feedback Forums and Systems

IMPLEMENTATION
MAINTENANCE AND TRACKING

Review and Maintenance

The IT Workforce Strategic Plan is a living document, and as such this plan proposes a cyclical review process in which the priorities and associated action plans of the plan are reviewed to ensure applicability – supported by the review of the objectives and action plans underneath each priority. Maintenance meetings and or working sessions will take place in regular intervals following the implementation of this plan. If stakeholders do not meet in such a manner, there is a potential risk that ineffective practices and or processes could continue to proliferate throughout the organization.

Tracking Progress

The plan creates a Strategic Plan Scorecard with each of the strategic priorities and associated action plans outlined in this strategy paired to target metrics that will be assessed during the review process to ensure progress against target goals. In conjunction with IT Workforce key stakeholders, the IT Workforce Standing Committee will maintain the Strategic Plan Scorecard and will leverage centralized data analytics capabilities to provide real-time progress on IT Workforce target metrics.

Contact Information

For more information or questions regarding this plan, please contact sm.ocio.cio.irmcoffice@usda.gov. Additional copies of this IT Workforce Strategic Plan can be downloaded from USDA's Web site at: www.usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.