INSPIRE: The Why of OneUSDA

- Vision: Secretary Perdue’s aspiration is to make USDA the most effective, the most efficient, the most customer-focused, and the best managed federal department.
- The key to realizing this vision is found within the hearts and minds of the USDA employees.
- Every single day, every single American, every single visitor to our country, is directly touched by the work of our employees. Every time a person eats, walks into a USDA field office, visits a National Forest, or plants a seed, that person is relying on the over 100,000 USDA employees to do their jobs well.
- The American people want and deserve a government that works for them and that listens to their needs. In order to do that, we at USDA must be one family, working together as a single team to serve the American people. We are all Team OneUSDA.
- Under OneUSDA, every single person, internal or external, no matter their rank or background, is treated the same way and has the same great experience and interaction with each and every USDA employee. This is accomplished through teamwork, transparency, consistency, and objectivity in all planning and decisions.
- Under OneUSDA, we do not segregate ourselves by individual office or agency. Instead we recognize how interconnected we are and how the work of one team complements or informs the work of another.
- Under OneUSDA, the customer’s needs are above those of the individual employee, agency, or mission area. We should all be able and willing to help, listen to, and hear our customers, no matter their question, no matter our job description.
- It is our job as representatives of Team OneUSDA—no matter our position—to ensure that our leaders, peers and employees under us understand and stay true to the value of our individual and collective service to the American public.

EDUCATE: The How of OneUSDA

- Since the Secretary and Deputy Secretary’s arrival at USDA, they have been working hard on initiatives that embody the OneUSDA concept.
- These initiatives all link back to the Secretary’s aspiration to make us the most effective, most efficient, the most customer-focused, and the best managed federal agency.
- These initiatives focus on:
  - Modernizing USDA mission support activities to be more efficient and effective by utilizing enterprise solutions;
  - Reducing burdens we place on our stakeholders and ourselves;
  - Creating an enduring culture of humble service to each other and the nation;
  - Serving customers and improving the delivery of USDA’s core missions;
  - Ensuring our commitment to the responsible use of resources; and
Championing transformative, collective leadership through empowerment and accountability.

- You have already seen evidence of these initiatives in the mission area realignments and the efforts to consolidate administrative support services for some agencies into business centers at the mission area.
- You have also heard of our IT modernization partnership with the White House Office of American Innovation.
- In the coming weeks and months we will be rolling out many more initiatives to further our OneUSDA efforts and provide the best service to our customers.
- Today, we are announcing a key initiative to reduce the burdens we place on ourselves through our Directives Process. Secretary Perdue is directing USDA to:
  - Restore sanity and commonsense to a cumbersome, labor-intensive, and costly departmental directive review process.
  - Streamline the reorganization process.
  - Revise our telework policy to one that works for the American taxpayer and for our colleagues who come to the office each day.
  - Review a wide array of directives – through the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Human Resources Management, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the Office of Property and Procurement Management – to create processes that are transparent, stream-lined and consistent for the employee, the supervisor, and the American citizen.

**REINFORCE: Embedding the OneUSDA message**

This messaging will first be delivered by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, with the expectation that the Mission Area Heads will utilize this message and the accompanying frequently asked questions (FAQ) document to create their own to pass along to their leadership and so on to all USDA employees. It is up to the Mission Area Heads to know how best to share and champion this information to the employees under them, e.g. via memo, email, town hall meetings, all-hands virtual events, or brown bags for supervisors, etc.

Expectation: by COB January 8th, all USDA employees will have heard about phase one of OneUSDA through their Mission Area heads.
OneUSDA: Phase One Rollout
January 4, 2018

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

OneUSDA

(1) What is OneUSDA?

OneUSDA is a call to action, an operating model, a reminder to all of us that we are part of one team, working together to provide the best service to our customers.

Under OneUSDA:

- Every single person, internal or external, no matter their rank or background, is treated the same way and has the same great experience and interaction with each and every USDA employee. This is accomplished through teamwork, transparency, consistency, and objectivity in all planning and decisions.
- We do not segregate ourselves by individual office or agency. Instead we recognize how interconnected we are and how the work of one team complements or informs the work of another.
- The customer’s needs are above those of the individual employee, agency, or mission area.
- We should all be able and willing to help, listen to, and hear our customers and each other, no matter the question, no matter our job description.
- We ensure that our leaders, peers and employees understand and stay true to the value of our individual and collective service to the American public.

(2) What does OneUSDA mean to me?

In short, OneUSDA means you are part of one team here at USDA. Being part of that team means that you support these Core Values:

- We expect and require complete honesty and integrity in all we do.
- We provide service to our customers on time, every time.
- We guard, conserve, and preserve USDA resources the taxpayers have entrusted to us.
- We make commitments with care and live up to them.
- We own up to problems and are always responsive.

(3) What should I expect from OneUSDA moving forward?

Today’s OneUSDA rollout is focused on cleaning up our internal directives to clarify expectations for employees, streamline onerous processes we imposed on ourselves, and eliminate obsolete guidance. We are changing the telework policy to ensure we are providing more consistent customer service and creating stronger workplace communities.
We have multiple OneUSDA initiatives coming out in the next few months. These initiatives will focus on:

- Modernizing USDA mission support activities to be more efficient and effective by utilizing enterprise solutions;
- Reducing burdens we place on our stakeholders and ourselves;
- Creating an enduring culture of humble service to each other and the nation;
- Serving customers and improving the delivery of USDA’s core missions;
- Ensuring our commitment to the responsible use of resources; and
- Championing transformative, collective leadership through empowerment and accountability.

**Directives and the announcement today**

(4) **What are the overall take-homes from the Secretary’s announcement today?**

The Secretary’s memo on Directives reissues 5 directives, designates several Departmental Administration offices to review and propose revisions within 60 days to human resources, cybersecurity/IT, and property management directives, and cancels 18 obsolete directives across various Program areas. The memo describes the reasons for each of these actions. The directives that are reissued are as follows:

- The process for creation, revision, and reissuance of directives (Departmental Regulation (DR) 0100-001 and Departmental Manual (DM) 0100-001): revised to streamline the review process and eliminate the creation of laborious paperwork.
- The process for review and approval of organizational changes (DR 1010-001): revised to streamline the review process and eliminate the creation of laborious paperwork.
- The USDA Telework Program (DR 4080-811-002): revised to ensure that customer service is appropriately balanced with employee flexibility.
- The internal process for approval and acceptance of conditional gifts (DR 5200-003): revised to clarify the process and removes outdated references.

The Secretary’s memo issuing changes to delegations for the Office of the General Counsel regarding settlement agreements is accompanied by a new DR delineating those changes (DR 1521-001 Legal Review and Execution of Settlement Agreements).

(5) **When will these changes go into effect?**

The reissued directives go into effect immediately. The clock for the 60 day review of the human resources, cybersecurity, and property management directives starts immediately, as well. For the telework directive, supervisors will have the discretion to allow their employees 30 days (2 pay periods) after issuance of the directive to adjust their schedules and plans as needed.
(6) Why were the directives listed chosen?

These directives were identified by Agency officials and subject-matter experts across USDA through the work of the Regulatory Reform Task Force and under the annual directives Sunset Review managed by Departmental Administration. The Secretary expects that the changes will streamline processes and clarify them in ways that make your jobs easier, freeing you up to focus on mission delivery and customer service, rather than be caught up in onerous or outdated internal procedures.

**Review of departmental directives**

(7) What will change in the process for departmental directive review?

Currently, if you want to revise a DR, it needs to go through full clearance from start to finish, no matter how big or small the change is. The new policy will be that if you have a minor change to a DR, you can simply submit an amendment to be put through the clearance process.

Currently, reviewers have a set number of days to review a document in order for it to be considered timely, but Offices of Primary Interest (OPIs) do not have a set number of days to reconcile the comments made by the reviewers. The new policy will set a number of days for OPI’s to reconcile all comments.

An expiration date will have to be added to all new, amended, revised or reissued directives to reduce the average age of directives to 5 years or fewer.

All of these changes are aimed to make the departmental directives review process significantly more efficient and timely.

**Organizational changes**

(8) What will change in the process for getting organizational changes approved?

Currently, new organizational change proposals and changes to existing organizations require preparation of extensive analyses and paperwork followed by the sequential review and clearance through multiple offices prior to review by the political leadership. This process is labor- and time-intensive with no guarantee that the proposal will be approved.

The new policy streamlines this process by first requiring preparation of a brief reorganization work plan that is submitted for concurrent clearance through relevant offices. The Secretary then reviews the work plan to decide if the reorganization can move forward, if approval of the final package can be delegated to the relevant Under or Assistant Secretary, and what documentation would be required for the final package.
(9) **What are the main changes to the telework policy?**

USDA will be amending its telework policy to one that enables our employees to accomplish their mission for the American taxpayer effectively and efficiently as part of OneUSDA. Some of the changes are as follows:

- There will be improved, common sense eligibility requirements for individuals seeking telework. For example, in the previous telework directive, employees whose duties required physical presence on a daily basis were eligible to telework if parts of their work could be accomplished at an alternative worksite. In the new directive, employees whose duties require physical presence in the office on a daily basis are not eligible to telework.
- Employees will only be permitted to telework 2 days per pay period.
- Employees will be required to work from their official work location 4 days per week.
- When telework is used to address space availability restrictions, such as the use of hoteling or desk-sharing, Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices may approve telework exceeding 2 days a pay period on a case-by-case basis.

Note that this DR does not affect what has been negotiated by employees under a Collective Bargaining Agreement. Employees seeking telework arrangements as a reasonable accommodation are required to follow Departmental, and agency or staff office procedures for reasonable accommodation.

(10) **I currently telework 100% of the time, since my duties do not require me to be in the office. How will this change in policy affect me?**

Since the new telework policy limits the amount of time you can telework within a pay period, if you want to continue to work full-time from an alternative work station, you should discuss with your supervisor a change in duty station.

(11) **Given that telework is permitted for 2 days per pay period, does that prevent me from working a flexible schedule (e.g. 5-4/9, or 4-10 compressed)?**

Telework should not preclude your having some flexible or compressed work schedules. However, it is important to note that the directive also states that all employees must work from the official worksite location 4 days per week, thus the telework schedule and tour of duty must accommodate that requirement.

Your supervisor has the ability to authorize employees with telework agreements and flexible schedules to telework for more than 1 day a week for infrequent, exigent situations on a case-by-case basis, as long as they weigh the balance between employees’ needs and the ability to deliver the Department’s mission with high quality customer service.

(12) **What was the rationale to reduce the number of telework days to 2 days a period and require physical presence at the official workstation for 4 days a week?**
As part of the OneUSDA initiative, we are requiring a greater physical presence in all USDA offices. We recognize the importance and value of telework. We also want to encourage greater collaboration and provide the best customer service to both internal and external stakeholders. We believe this change will make us more accountable to the American taxpayer and more accountable to one another.

(13) Who determines if my position is telework ineligible?

The Mission Area, Agency Heads, or Staff Office Directors are ultimately responsible for determining eligibility for all employees of the agency or staff office to participate in telework. This responsibility can be delegated down to managers and/or supervisors, as needed.

(14) Are there circumstances where I may be considered for telework exceeding the 2 days per pay period?

A Mission Area, agency, or staff office head may approve teleworking exceeding 2 days a pay period when addressing space availability restrictions, such as the use of hoteling or desk sharing. Agency or staff office heads are encouraged to present to their political leadership any other impacts on business decisions that the changes in telework may have on their operations.

(15) If I’m already within 2 days per pay period of telework in my current agreement, do I need to sign a new agreement?

The new policy is accompanied by an updated telework agreement form, so you should plan on discussing your telework agreement with your supervisor and signing the new form.

(16) I am a telework program coordinator for my agency. Is there anything in particular I should be doing to accommodate the changes to the telework policy?

Familiarize yourself with the new policy and accompanying telework agreement form. Also make sure you plan to attend a coordination meeting with all USDA telework program coordinators—the invitation will come from the Office of Human Resource Management for the second week in January.

Changes in delegation of authority to General Counsel

(17) How will the changes in delegation of authority to the General Counsel impact me as an employee?

For most employees, it will not. This will only affect agency officials involved in making or agreeing to settlement proposals. If you have no authority to bind the agency financially, then you are not impacted at all.