



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA
wants
YOU!



Veterans in Agriculture



Veterans in Farming



Employment in Agriculture



Military Families

VETERANS

and agriculture are a great fit.



Getting Started, Realizing Success

If you are thinking about farming or ranching as a post-service career, there has never been a more important time to get involved in agriculture. With nearly 60,000 high-skilled job openings annually in the food, agriculture, renewable resources, and environmental fields in the United States,¹ there are numerous opportunities for you to contribute your talents and experiences.

As a military veteran, your leadership training, skills, and perspective can help America meet the challenges of producing food and strengthening rural and urban communities. Feeding a growing global population demands a 70-percent increase in food production by 2050. The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) wants you to be a part of the next generation feeding the Nation and the world.

Whether on the farm or off the farm, USDA can help get you started and achieve success in this rewarding industry that provides a steady supply of food, fuel, and fiber in the United States and to the world.

¹ Goecker, Allan D., et al. 2015. *Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources, and the Environment: United States, 2015-2020*. www.purdue.edu/usda/employment.



Are you interested in operating and managing a farm or ranch?

Because of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (also known as the 2014 Farm Bill), USDA is ensuring our current programs and resources help new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including veterans, who are interested in beginning a farming or ranching career.



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What do I do first?

Many farmers say that farming is not only a job, but a lifestyle that is both demanding and rewarding. Visit us at www.usda.gov/veterans to learn more about beginning a farming or ranching career, read about other military veterans who have made farming their post-service career, and see if it is the right fit for you.



Come Talk to Us

USDA has Service Centers across the country ready to serve you. Visit www.usda.gov/veterans to connect to a local USDA Service Center in your community where you can speak to someone about farming and USDA programs.

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USDA can provide technical assistance.

Farming and ranching require a lifelong commitment to learning and developing the best methods to care for crops, animals, and the land.

Training opportunities and technical assistance can be a great way to equip yourself with the right tools and skills to start or manage a farm and build key experiences and qualifications to participate in certain USDA programs. We invite you to get connected to the following opportunities and to learn how your GI Bill benefits can help make your farming or ranching career possible.



- Through **nonprofit partners**, USDA supports the development of **apprenticeships, training opportunities, and resources** to help beginning and veteran farmers start or gain experience in farming.
- If you have a disability, **adaptive technologies** are available to help you be successful in agriculture. USDA supports organizations across the country that can provide you with more information and work with you to find a solution.

- As a veteran farmer, you can benefit from being connected to other veteran or beginning farmers. USDA supports the development of **networks for beginning and veteran farmers** and can connect you to these opportunities.
- USDA and a network of **agricultural colleges** (land-grant colleges and universities) around the country work together to support **Extension agents** who can help answer questions about common issues faced by farmers and provide educational events for the agricultural community.
- USDA can connect you to **online educational resources and tools** for developing a business plan, designing and installing conservation practices, troubleshooting, pest and disease management, and marketing strategies for creating a sustainable business.



USDA can provide capital for land, livestock, seed, and related operating expenses.

The core ingredients to starting a farm operation include land and capital, and USDA can help. **As a veteran, you may be eligible for special preferences, priorities, and incentives that increase your flexibility and access to capital.** Additional benefits may be available to you as a beginning farmer. USDA staff at your local USDA Service Center can help you better understand these programs and what is available to you as a veteran.

Visit www.usda.gov/veterans for more information and to get connected to the following USDA programs:

USDA is referred to as the “**Lender of First Opportunity**” because we make and guarantee loans to beginning farmers and ranchers who otherwise might not be able to obtain a loan from a commercial lender. Veterans may also qualify for incentives that make it easier to acquire capital for a farm operation. USDA makes different types of loans depending on what the loan is for:

- **Farm Ownership Loans** will help you purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, construct a new or improve an existing farm or ranch building, pay closing costs, and pay for soil and water conservation and protection.

- **Operating Loans** will help you purchase livestock and equipment, pay for minor real estate repairs and annual operating expenses, and refinance farm-related debt. Some examples of what this loan can be used for include seed and fertilizer, marketing and distribution, hoop houses to extend the growing season, irrigation, and delivery vehicles.
- **Microloans** are operating loans designed for smaller, purchases and involve a shortened application process with reduced paperwork. Microloans can be used for all expenses authorized by an operating loan.
- **Farm Storage Facility Loans** provide low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities for certain commodities.



USDA also makes conservation and emergency loans, guarantees loans, and provides land contract guarantees.

- **Access to land:** When available, USDA provides first priority to beginning, veteran, or underserved farmers to purchase land owned by USDA and helps support access to land transitioning out of the Conservation Reserve Program.
- **New product development and marketing:** A USDA grant can support the development of a business plan and new products, and the marketing activities for the products. As a veteran, you may be eligible for priority consideration.



USDA can assist with managing risk.

Agriculture is a market- and weather-dependent industry. Realizing success in agriculture requires producers to proactively manage risk. USDA programs are founded on the principles of risk management and can help you protect your farm from downturns due to markets and weather. Beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for reduced premiums, application fee waivers, increased insurance coverage, and other incentives for applicable programs.



USDA can help improve the quality of the land.

Farmers and ranchers understand that the land is a resource to be protected and enhanced. USDA has programs to help producers plan, implement, and maintain their conservation practices. As a veteran, you may be eligible for a cost share of up to 90 percent and advance payments of up to 50 percent for the costs of conservation practices. You may also receive preference for payments to help maintain and improve upon your existing conservation systems.



Seeking Employment at USDA or in the U.S. Agriculture Industry

Are you interested in employment with USDA or in the agricultural industry?

USDA's Veterans Employment Program Office (VEPO) can help meet your career needs.

Veterans seeking employment with USDA may qualify for preferences and hiring authorities that enhance their job search.

USDA's Veterans Employment Program Office can review and give feedback on résumés, help match individual skills and qualifications with possible careers, and explain the Federal application process, special hiring authority eligibility, and category rating for veterans.

Visit www.usda.gov/veterans for more information on careers at USDA and beyond.



USDA offers many career opportunities. Veterans and their spouses have skills that are needed in our offices and laboratories across the United States and abroad.

- **Management:** Accounting, Budget, Contracting, Human Resources, Agricultural Law, Communications
- **Agribusiness and Industry:** Crop Insurance, Economics, International Trade, Loan Management
- **Science and Technology:** Agronomy, Animal Science, Food Inspection, Forestry, Nutrition, Wildlife Biology
- **Internships:** Paid work experience with USDA for veterans pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited college or university



USDA can assist in connecting veterans and their spouses with employment opportunities in the agricultural industry (outside of USDA).

USDA participates in a variety of veterans' hiring efforts coordinated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Department of Labor, and it partners with non-profit organizations and private corporations to encourage veterans employment. Veterans and their spouses can also gain important farming and other agriculture training and work experience through Registered Apprenticeships developed by employers in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. During a Registered Apprenticeship, veterans can earn wages that are supplemented by GI Bill benefits.



Supporting Military Families and Communities

USDA offers a variety of programs and partnerships with Federal, State, and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations, to help ensure veterans and their families prosper.

Visit www.usda.gov/veterans to get connected to the following resources:

- Veterans and their families undergoing difficult economic times may qualify for benefits that can be used at stores and farmers markets, low-cost or free meals to children at school, or other **nutrition programs** to ensure families can eat right when money is tight. Certain pay and allowances that service members and veterans receive will not affect eligibility for these programs.
- **Education and training benefits** that can be accessed by a veteran or transferred to his or her spouse or children.
- Loans and grants to expand **businesses** and support **community facilities** in rural America.
- **Housing loans and rental assistance** to individuals and families living in rural America.
- **On-base support** for health and wellness, family dynamics, and communication.
- **4-H clubs** that provide educational activities for military youth.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



USDA Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison

The **USDA Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison** was created by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (also known as the 2014 Farm Bill), in order to coordinate USDA activities to provide information, resources, and support for active duty military and veterans interested in agriculture. The Liaison has authority to facilitate formal relationships between USDA and other government agencies and non-profit organizations to strengthen USDA support for veterans.

USDA is committed to helping veterans transition back home and find meaningful work in agriculture. The Liaison is focused on helping returning veterans who are interested in beginning a farming or ranching career, supporting increased agricultural employment opportunities at USDA and beyond, and fully leveraging USDA programs to support military families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.USDA.GOV/VETERANS

