

Agricultural Marketing Service



Student Intern Handbook

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Welcome to AMS!

Welcome to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), United States Department of Agriculture. We are delighted you have joined Team AMS for your internship experience! Your role is critical in fulfilling the mission of AMS.

You are about to begin a journey in which you will have an opportunity to:

1. Apply classroom knowledge in the workplace;
2. Learn new skills to use in your chosen career field;
3. Make a positive step forward in your career path; and
4. Gain valuable resume-building experiences, and grow your professional network.

As you work and learn during your internship, Team AMS is prepared to help make your internship experience a successful one!

Onboarding in USDA and AMS

Welcome to the “People’s Department.” We are pleased to have you join us in our proud tradition of public service. During your first week at AMS, you will be busy learning about the organization, getting settled in, and meeting your new colleagues. We want to make sure that your onboarding experience goes smoothly, and helps you quickly get acclimated to our organization. To this end, we have created a Student Intern Welcome Checklist (Appendix A) to help you. Also, we would like for you to view the [AMS New Employee Welcome Video](#) which will provide an additional overview of the agency.

For incoming interns working in the USDA South Building, the [Department's New Employee Orientation](#) provides additional, site-specific information. For interns in the field, please talk to your supervisor for site-specific information.

Your Supervisor

Your supervisor will welcome you to your team; introduce you to the culture and values of USDA- AMS; explain what is expected of you; and supervise and assign your work. USDA- AMS relies on your supervisor to make your internship experience as smooth and successful as possible.

Overview of USDA

USDA serves all Americans daily, and the [USDA website](#) describes the USDA mission and vision, as follows:

“We provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.

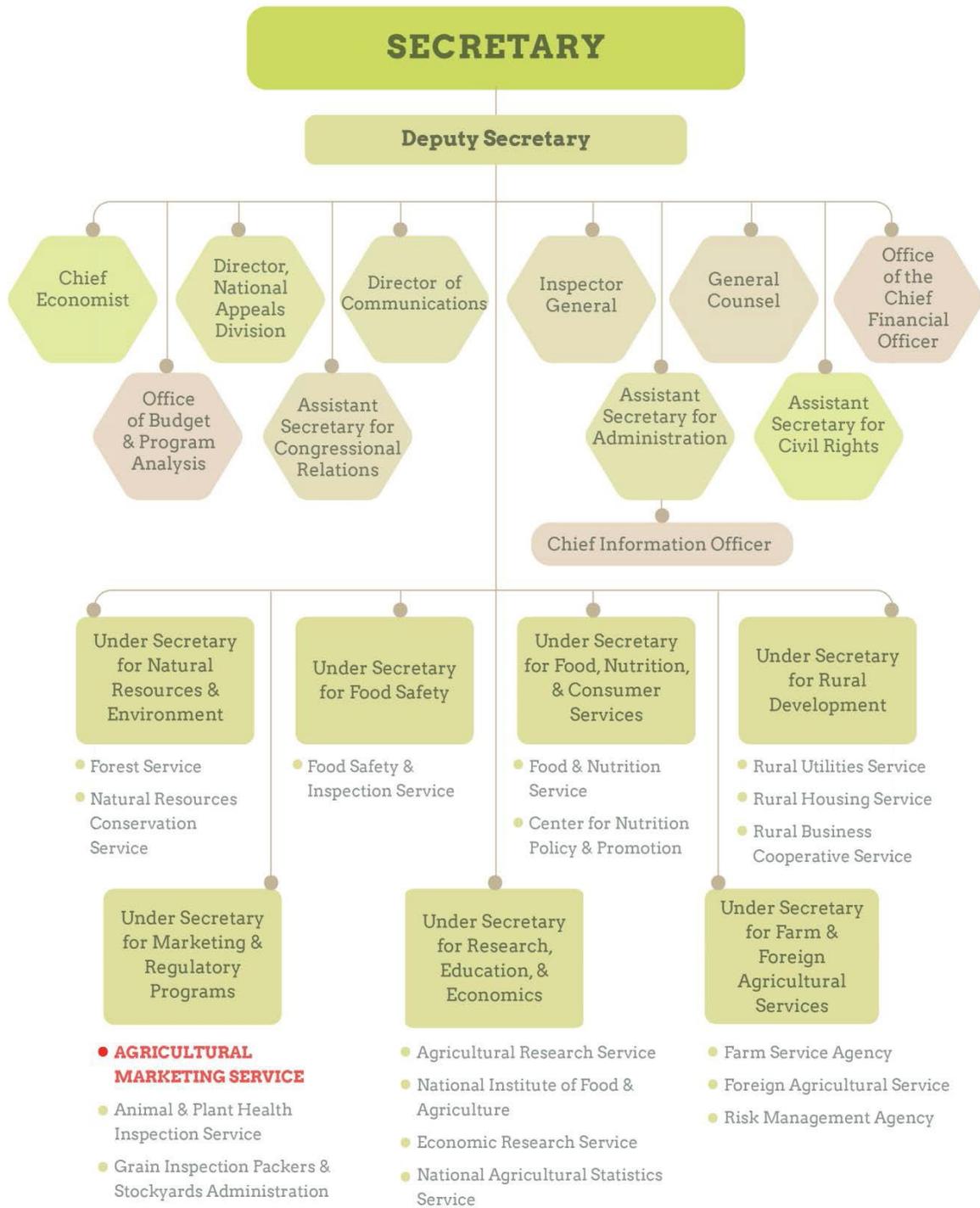
We have a vision to provide economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our Nation's natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.”

In the Department's early years, the vast majority of Americans lived on farms, and farmers produced only enough food supply for themselves, their families, and a few other people. Today, although less than 3 percent of the population resides on farmland, farm workers produce enough for this country—as well as for growing export markets. Agriculture is, in fact, this Nation's largest industry and its largest employer. Approximately 21 million people work in some phase of agriculture, from growing food and fiber to selling it in the supermarket. In addition, Americans enjoy better diets because of USDA's nutrition research, educational efforts, and food assistance programs.

USDA research findings, directly and indirectly, benefit all Americans. The Department's thorough inspection and grading services safeguard and assure standards of quality in the daily food supply. [Read more about USDA.](#)

USDA Organization Chart

This organization chart displays the Headquarters Organization, including the Secretary, Chief Officers, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries for various agencies within USDA.



You can review [additional information on each of the USDA's seven Mission Areas](#) online.

Overview of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

In 1939, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace consolidated a number of bureaus and programs to create a single Agency to carry out a sweeping mission. The new Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) was charged with facilitating the efficient, fair marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including food, fiber, and specialty crops. Over the last 76 years, AMS has evolved to support American farmers, ranchers, importers, exporters and many other facets of the agricultural industry. AMS administers programs that create domestic and international marketing opportunities for U.S. producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. AMS provides the agriculture industry with valuable services to ensure the quality and availability of wholesome food for consumers across the country.

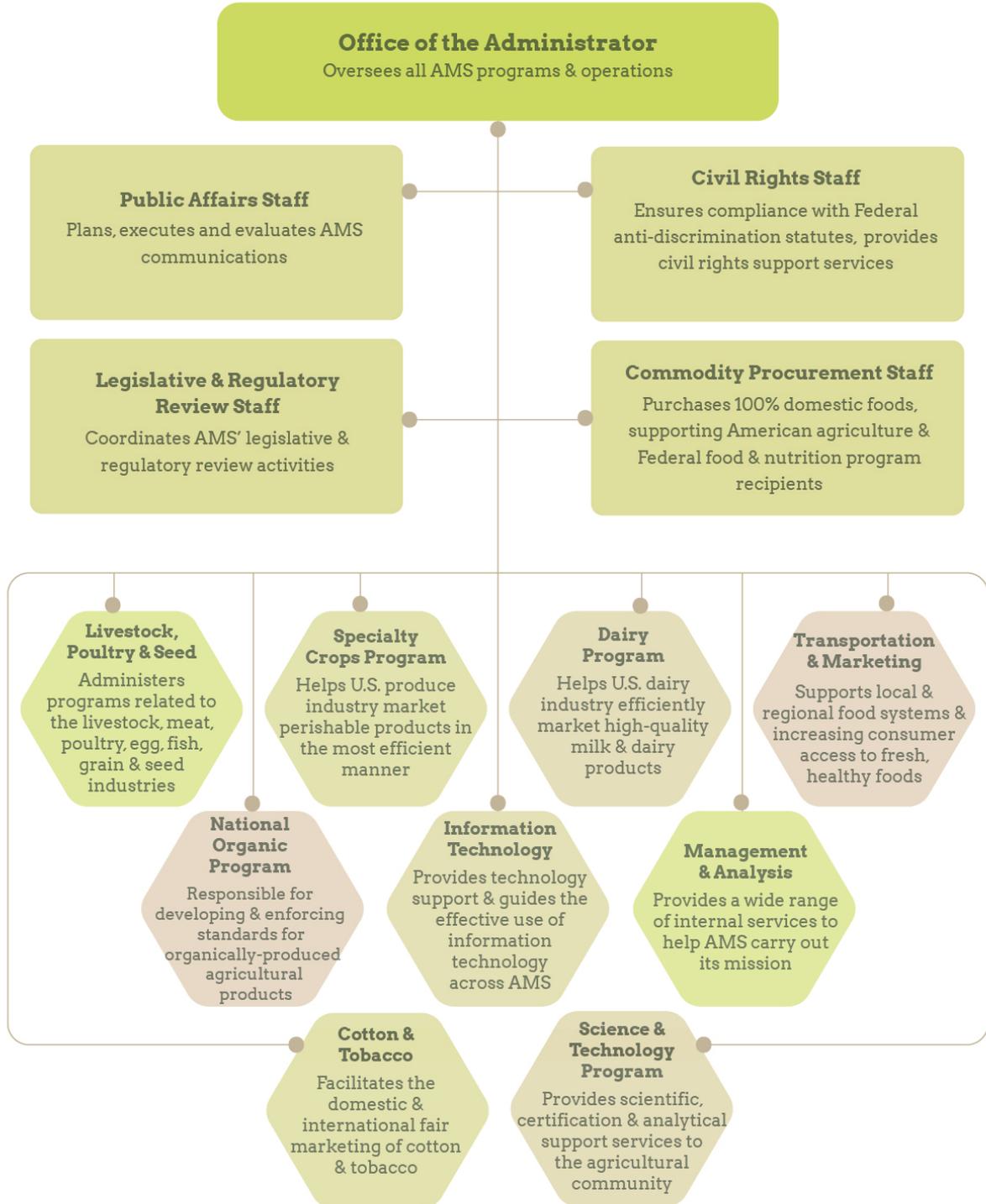
Nearly 4,000 AMS professionals work every day to support the country's diverse agricultural operations, which range from individual farmers to international businesses and employ 1 in 12 people. AMS services and its millions of dollars in annual grant investments also create opportunities by supporting economic development in small towns and rural communities that stand as the backbone of American values.

AMS is organized into nine Program areas and has four management staff offices, including the Civil Rights Staff, the Commodity Procurement Staff, the Legislative and Regulatory Review Staff, and the Public Affairs Staff. Much of the Agency's support for agriculture is provided through commodity-specific efforts, including the Cotton and Tobacco Program, the Dairy Program, the Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program, and the Specialty Crops Program. AMS oversees the National Organic Program, the Science and Technology Program, and the Transportation and Marketing Program. AMS has two Programs which focus on administrative management, the Management and Analysis Program and the Information Technology Service. AMS provides regulatory oversight for over 20 research and promotion programs, and enforces other Federal regulations such as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) and the Federal Seed Act.

Together, these units work as a dynamic whole—a world-class system designed to facilitate the efficient, fair marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including food, fiber, and specialty crops.

[Biographies for the leaders of AMS Programs and Staff Offices](#) are available on our website.

AMS Organization Chart



Office of the Administrator

AMS is led by an Administrator who is politically appointed. AMS has two Associate Administrators who assist the Administrator in developing and implementing the Agency’s various programs and services. Each of the nine Programs is led by a Deputy Administrator; each Staff Office is led by a Director. Your supervisor will provide you with more information about the supervisory structure of your specific organization.

Civil Rights

The [Office of Civil Rights](#) is responsible for ensuring Agency compliance with Federal statutes that prohibit discrimination in hiring, employment and program delivery. The Civil Rights staff serves as principle advisors to the Administrator and Agency senior staff on all civil rights issues.

The Civil Rights Office is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of affirmative employment, special emphasis programs, compliance reviews, student/internship opportunities, EEO complaints process, alternative dispute resolution and related training. Employees also provide a variety of [civil rights support services to the Agency](#), both in our Washington, DC headquarters and regional field offices across the nation.

Commodity Procurement

AMS purchases a variety of domestically produced and processed commodity food products, through a competitive process among approved vendors. These [purchases made by the AMS Commodity Procurement Staff](#) (CPS) support American agriculture by encouraging the consumption of domestic foods. CPS manages the Web-Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM), the fully integrated, web-based ordering and procurement system used for the purchase of USDA Foods.

Some of the purchases help producers provide an outlet for surplus products. The wholesome, high quality products, collectively called USDA Foods, are delivered to schools, food banks, and households in communities across the country and are a vital component of our nation’s food safety.



A 2015 infographic about USDA Food Purchasing. [View larger.](#)

Legislative and Regulatory Review

The Legislative and Regulatory Review Staff has responsibility for the overall coordination of the Agency's legislative and regulatory review activities that are governed by some 50 separate statutes, the Agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) activities and the Agency's Information Collection activities.

Public Affairs

The Public Affairs office plans, coordinates, executes and evaluates AMS' communications, enhancing the Agency's brand and protecting its reputation as the trusted authority consumers and stakeholders can rely on to ensure the quality and wholesomeness of agricultural commodities moving into the commercial marketplace.

The Public Affairs office works responsibly with news media of all types so that AMS messaging is clearly understood by the Agency's numerous stakeholders and consumers nationwide.

Outreach

AMS serves farmers, ranchers, and businesses of all sizes, and the Outreach staff supports and serves all of our stakeholders, including our Farm Bill supported grants to organic certification, grading services to plant variety protection.

In conjunction with the Department's Office of Advocacy and Outreach, our Outreach staff is focused on:

- Improving the viability and profitability of small and beginning farmers and ranchers
- Improving access to USDA programs for historically underserved communities
- Improving agricultural opportunities for farm workers
- Closing the professional achievement gap by providing opportunities to talented and diverse young people to support the agricultural industry in the 21st century
- Improving diversity on USDA advisory boards and committees



Small farmers & ranchers in the South learn about organic certification

Cotton and Tobacco (C&T) Program

The Cotton and Tobacco Program, based in Memphis, TN, facilitates the domestic and international fair marketing of cotton and tobacco through a variety of services used by industry to measure quality, ensure consistency and report market activity. The program's standards are used by more than 50 countries for the instrument and visual grading of cotton and tobacco.

During a typical cotton season, the Program's services are used to test raw cotton valued at about \$6 billion. Its tobacco services include the grading and random sampling of certified samples that represent tens of millions of pounds of domestic and imported tobacco.

The AMS Cotton Program maintains the National Database (NDB) that allows owners or authorized agents of owners to retrieve classing data from the current crop and/or the previous four crops. The NDB stores classing information from all 10 regional classing offices.



Staff in our Memphis cotton classing office show OA visitors from HQ how their new technology works.

Dairy Program

The mission of Dairy Program is to facilitate the efficient marketing of milk and dairy products. The Dairy Program's vision is to be efficient, effective, and innovative in program service delivery in the continually changing industry and government environments and to provide excellence in customer service and industry relations with highly skilled and motivated employees.

The Dairy Program recognizes that our government service is a public trust for which we are all accountable. We subscribe to the following core values in our service to the dairy industry, the public, and within our own organization: cooperation, fairness, integrity, objectivity, and respect.

The AMS Dairy Program helps the U.S. dairy industry efficiently market high-quality milk and dairy products. It also ensures that U.S. consumers have access to a sufficient supply of these products at all times.

Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program

The AMS Livestock, Poultry and Seed (LPS) Program is a team of close to 1,000 Federal and an additional 1,000 State employees who operate under Federal oversight by cooperative agreements with all 50 States. This work is carried out through seven different LPS Divisions. LPS administers a wide range of the Agency's programs related to the livestock, meat, poultry, egg, fish, grain, and seed industries as well as regulatory and support functions that extend to other commodities.

The programs include retail country of origin and method of production labeling programs, quality grading services, testing services, domestic and export auditing and accreditation services, mandatory and voluntary market news reporting services, economic and statistical analysis services, research and promotion program oversight, grant programs, and food product specification development and acceptance services for Federal food and nutrition assistance programs including the National School Lunch Program.

National Organic Program

The National Organic Program (NOP) is a regulatory program housed within AMS. NOP is responsible for developing national standards for organically-produced agricultural products. These standards assure consumers that products with the USDA organic seal meet consistent, uniform standards. NOP regulations do not address food safety or nutrition.

Science & Technology Program

The Science & Technology Program (S&T) provides scientific, certification, and analytical support services to the agricultural community to improve the quality, wholesomeness, and marketing of agricultural products domestically and internationally. S&T supports AMS and other USDA Agencies, Federal and State agencies, and private sector food and agricultural industries. S&T is organized into three divisions: [Laboratory Approval & Testing Division](#) (LATD); [Monitoring Programs Division](#) (MPD); and the [Plant Variety Protection Office](#) (PVPO).



AMS Food Chemists (from left to right) Lauren Shoemaker, Jonathan Barber, Kouassi Dje provide scientific & analytical support at our National Lab

Specialty Crops Program

The Specialty Crops Program (SCP) helps buyers and sellers of all sizes in the U.S. produce industry to market their perishable products in the most efficient manner. We partner with State agencies and other industry organizations for the benefit of nationwide growers, shippers, brokers, receivers, processors, retailers and restaurants, direct to consumer sales, and the foodservice industry.

SCP offers a wide array of services that span from helping market the quality of products to ensuring that there is fair trade in the produce industry. The program also helps specialty crop growers and handlers to combine their resources to help their respective industries overcome marketing barriers.

Transportation & Marketing Program

The Transportation and Marketing (T&M Program supports local and regional food systems and increasing consumer access to fresh, healthy foods in our communities. Our programs, grants and services help small- and mid-sized producers access marketing opportunities through the combination of applied research, technical services and grant support.

T&M serves as the expert source for economic analysis on agricultural transportation from farm to markets through transportation market reports, regulatory representation and technical assistance. T&M administers farmers market and local food grant programs to help farmers and ranchers market the food they produce, including programs that further farmers markets, local food systems and specialty crops, such as fruit and vegetables.

The [USDA Farmers Market](#) and [People's Garden](#) located at the Headquarters building serves as a “living laboratory” for farmers markets and community gardens. T&M also manages [USDA's Local Food Directories](#), a set of online resources that are designed to provide customers with convenient access to information about farmers markets, CSAs, on-farm markets and food hub locations, directions, hours, product offerings and accepted forms of payment.



People's Garden Manager Annie Ceccarini helped guests at the 2016 White House Easter Egg Roll plant window boxes.

Information Technology Service

The Information Technology Service (ITS) provides technology support services to all of the Agency's business units and is responsible for guiding the effective and efficient use of information technology across AMS.

ITS supports the Agency's strategic goals and USDA's strategic IT priorities by keeping AMS technology investments business-driven, solution-oriented, and sustainable. From investment planning, to application development, network performance, and user support, the service helps Agency programs use information technology to successfully deliver their mission in the 21st Century.



Code for America Northern Virginia Brigade members tackle hackathon challenges in the foreground while USDA subject matter experts & IT specialists provide support in the background (right side).

Management & Analysis Program

Management and Analysis (M&A) is an internal Agency program that provides a wide range of professional services to AMS to help carry out its mission. M&A services include: analysis and information that supports decision-making; administrative management; employee safety and stewardship of facilities and resources; homeland security; compliance and investigations; budget and performance monitoring; financial management procedures and monitoring; management tools and reform initiatives that support mission achievement; and process improvement activities.

AMS Facilities

With nearly 3,700 employees and 96 locations, AMS has offices and laboratories across the United States.

Map of AMS office & laboratory locations across the country and in Puerto Rico.



Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services

The Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS) unit of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) provides resource management and administrative services to support the objectives of the three MRP agencies—the [Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](#), the [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#), and the [Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration \(GIPSA\)](#).

Our employees provide administrative support services in the areas of budget, finance, human resources, information technology, procurement, property management, and related administrative services. Our primary responsibilities are:

- Developing administrative management policy and procedures
- Implementing and operating administrative servicing systems
- Providing administrative support to agency units and programs
- Evaluating agency administrative systems

Human Resources Division

The Human Resources Division (HRD) serves the 14,000 employees of the MRP Mission Area - Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). In addition, they provide HR operational support to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) and the headquarters employees within the Natural Resources Conservation Program (NRCS). HRD partners with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) leaders and managers to provide quality human resource services for employees. HRD's primary services are to help employees accomplish their work by:

- Recruiting and hiring high-caliber personnel to carry out the mission
- Providing insurance and retirements benefits information
- Processing salaries, promotions, recognition, and benefits in a timely manner
- Providing policy guidance on performance and labor management
- Providing supervisors the training and tools they need to support and counsel their employees
- Creating a supportive, diverse, and attractive workplace culture
- Promoting the health, safety, and security of employees
- Planning for workforce and succession needs
- Offering seminars on employee & leadership development
- Providing coaching, mentoring and leadership transition services for managers
- Supporting employee development through AgLearn

Human Resource Management Contacts can be located at APHIS website

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/HRD/Contact_Us

Policies and Regulations

You will benefit from reading and understanding the regulations and policies that affect your work and conduct as an intern. Each Agency within the Department publishes regulations, policies, and procedures to supplement those provided by USDA or to provide information on matters that pertain only to that Agency. Pertinent information is contained in directives, manuals, circulars, and instructions. Some AMS-wide resources are listed below.

Each new intern should review:

- The USDA Directive - [DR 4070-735-001](#)
- The Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch - [5 CFR 2635](#)
- The Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the USDA - [5 CFR 8301](#)

Ethical Conduct

As public servants, our actions and words are highly scrutinized. Therefore, we must act in the most professional and ethical manner possible. In accordance with USDA Departmental Regulation 4070-735-001, it is USDA's policy that its employees;

- Maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality;
- Adhere to the rules set forth in the directive as well as all directives referenced in section 2 of this directive; USDA DR4070-735-001 Professional Conduct Policy

- Comply with lawful supervisory direction; and
- Comply with work related laws, regulations, and policies; and
- Understand and comply with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 CFR 2635 and the Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the USDA, 5 CFR 8301.

Agencies may terminate interns for misconduct, suitability, or poor performance during or at the end of the program period.

At the USDA, we pride ourselves on the fact that our employees work diligently to meet both the letter and the spirit of the ethics laws and regulations. In order to become well versed on these rules and regulations, ethics training is essential. By continuing our tradition of compliance with Federal ethics regulations, we ensure the public's confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of our programs.

Each Agency within USDA has a staff of ethics advisors. These are the folks who review the confidential financial disclosure reports filed by covered staff, administer your ethics training program, and stand ready to field your questions. If you have any doubts whatsoever regarding the permissibility of a specific action, you should first e-mail or call your ethics advisor. They know your program activities and are likely able to respond immediately.

Political Activities

Under the 1939 Hatch Act, Federal employees face restrictions on their ability to participate in political activities. Congress amended the Hatch Act in 1993 to permit more political activity, although many restrictions still apply. Certain agencies and categories of employees, primarily in national security and law enforcement, are covered by the stricter rules that predate that amendment. Further information can be obtained from the [Office of Ethics Political Activities](#).

Professionalism

As an intern, you are representing not just yourself, but your university and your fellow students, both current and future. As an intern you are expected to adhere to AMS's policies, practices, procedures, dress code, and/or standards of conduct. To avoid any misunderstanding, it is recommended that you obtain clarification regarding such matters from your supervisor when you begin your internship.

Interns are required to maintain the established work schedule and meet the internship obligations. It will be the responsibility of the intern to contact his/her supervisor for absences, excused or not.

You will conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Reporting to work on-time. Maintaining required work schedule.
- Following all rules and policies as required by interns.
- Maintaining strict confidentiality regarding information obtained on any clients, members, customers, and products or services associated with the internship site.
- Using appropriate written and oral communication in all interactions with all supervisors, employees, clients and customers.
- Observing all established safety rules and avoiding unsafe work practices.
- Demonstrating honesty, cooperation, integrity, courtesy, and a willingness to learn.
- Engaging in positive, ethical, and legal behavior.
- Accept responsibility and accountability for decisions and actions taken while at the internship site.

- Treat all customers, clients, supervisors, and fellow employees/interns with dignity and respect.

Work Expectations

Work expectations will vary depending on your position and program. Your supervisor will communicate expectations, assign projects, review completed work, collaboratively establish performance metrics, provide performance feedback, and assist in professional development opportunities. You are expected to complete your work in a timely and efficient fashion, ask questions if directions are unclear, and notify your supervisor when the assignments are complete. This enables you to make the best use of your time and capitalize on development opportunities. In most cases, the supervisor will establish a performance plan, if applicable, that shows how your work connects with your organization's mission and goals.

Dress Code

Neither AMS nor USDA has a formal dress code policy. Some AMS employees wear uniforms and have a uniform policy, but for most of us, the AMS office dress code is business casual. Your work setting and environment will influence your clothing style, and your goal is to dress appropriately for each occasion.

We suggest you project a positive, professional image at all times, because your choice of attire is a reflection on you *and* AMS. Inappropriate clothing includes: shorts, flip flops, short skirts, crop tops, t-shirts with advertising, and clothing that is not neat and clean and free of tears or holes. If you have any questions about what might be appropriate or not appropriate to wear at your worksite, please talk with your supervisor.

Telephone Tips

We must make every effort to maintain good customer service. Listed below are several tips for a successful telephone conversation:

- Check voice mail frequently throughout the day.
- Maintain an up-to-date and accurate message at all times.
- Answer your phone personally whenever possible.
- Use self-discipline to maintain an ongoing dialogue; even in difficult situations.
- Make a brief apology if there is a problem, and do it with a smile. Callers can always hear your smile.
- Let the other person talk without interrupting him/her.
- Improve listening by taking accurate notes.
- Ask questions so that you keep in tune with what the caller is thinking as well as saying.
- Always remember: to each and every person who calls, you are a representative of AMS.

AMS Internet Use

AMS provides links to the Internet to enhance business capabilities. Users are encouraged to use the Internet as a valuable source of information in their work and as a tool to disseminate information about AMS programs and activities. As with other AMS assets, however, [Internet access and use](#) must be protected against waste, fraud, unauthorized use, and/or abuse. Use of the Internet requires responsible judgment, supervisory discretion, and compliance with applicable laws. Use of AMS access to the Internet and other information technology in ways that violate ethical standards, deprive Americans of rightful value for their tax dollars, or embarrass this Agency, will not be tolerated.

Email

AMS uses Microsoft Outlook as its email and calendar tool. There are courses on Microsoft Outlook available on AgLearn. It is important to make sure you are helpful and responsible as an AMS email user. Remember, as a government employee there is no expectation of privacy in email or any other applications on a government computer, smartphone, or tablet.

- You should not use your government email addresses for personal business.
- If you receive email containing sensitive information, please contact your supervisor if you are unsure about your agency's protocol.
- You should not use the email system to transmit messages that contain confidential business information, inappropriate information, information covered by the Privacy Act, or other sensitive information.
- All email is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and its release is subject to the same FOIA exemptions that apply to other Agency records.

All emails you send or receive must be properly managed on a daily basis. As an intern, it is your responsibility to manage your email. You should follow email etiquette in preparing, sending, and responding to messages to ensure that your message is professional and appropriate.

GSA Federal Building Rules

As an employee of a Federal organization, there are specific rules which accompany working in a Federal building as described in the GSA Federal Building Rules. Specifically, actions that are prohibited on Federal property are as follows;

- Loitering, exhibiting disorderly conduct, and/ or exhibiting other conduct that is a disturbance;
- Gambling, operating gambling devices, or selling or purchasing tickets;
- Being under the influence, using or possessing any narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, barbiturates, or amphetamines;
- Being under the influence or using alcoholic beverages on federal property, unless a written exemption has been granted and approved through appropriate organization representatives;
- Soliciting alms or commercial or political donations, vending merchandise of all kinds, displaying or distrusting commercial advertising or collecting private debts;
- Posting or affixing materials such as pamphlets, handouts, or flyers on bulletin boards or elsewhere on GSA controlled property;
- Carrying or possessing explosives or items intended to be used to fabricate an explosive; and
- Possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons in Federal facilities and Federal court facilities by all persons not specifically authorized

USDA Identification Credential/Card (LincPass)

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12), issued on August 12, 2004, calls for a mandatory, Government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of IDs issued by the Federal Government to its employees and employees of Federal contractors for access to federally controlled facilities and networks.

USDA's HSPD-12 compliant ID is called the LincPass, as it is designed to link a person's identity to an ID credential and the credential to a person's ability to physically and logically access federally controlled buildings and information systems, respectively. Since the LincPass is used not only for identification purposes, but also to access both Federal computer systems and Federal facilities, it is very important that

LincPass cardholders safeguard their LincPass at all times.

Information is provided to new employees who meet the issuance criteria for the LincPass credential through a series of emails from HSPD12Admin@identitymsp.com regarding the enrollment process and what needs to be done prior to the card's issuance. More [in-depth information on HSPD-12 and the LincPass credentialing process](#) is available online.

Some AMS Interns will be provided a LincPass. Seasonal Interns will not be provided a LincPass due to their short tenure with the USDA. The LincPass is your personal identity verification card. The LincPass is used to start your computer as well as access to the facility. Your supervisor will provide additional guidance on whether you will receive a LincPass. Your supervisor will also provide you with information about how to log on to your computer or access the facility without one, if applicable.

AMS Workplace Safety

AMS is a diverse Agency, in regards to its daily work setting and environments. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and Executive Order 12196 charge the Federal Government to ensure that all employees are safeguarded from workplace hazards which could cause serious physical harm or death. To help meet this responsibility, interns are to be cognizant of the workplace hazards in their laboratory, processing plant, market, or business office, and follow all local safety policies. Interns who work in a plant may be required to follow some practices specified by the company (such as slip resistant or impact resistant shoes, hearing protection in some locations, etc.) Interns should be oriented to current practices and policies by their supervisor.

If you are injured on the job, please report the event to your supervisor promptly, to help protect yourself from further injury and to arrange treatment as necessary. For further information, ask your supervisor for the name of your respective program safety coordinator, or contact the AMS Safety and Occupational Health Manager at 202-720-4352 or Richard.Tyner@ams.usda.gov.

The following page is the map of the meeting location if AMS Headquarters staff are required to evacuate the South Building. Please print this map out for reference.

Additional Information and Numbers of Interest

- USDA's D.C. Health Unit – (202) 720-3281 or <http://www.dm.usda.gov/oo/health.htm>
- Employee Assistance Program – (800) 222-0364
- USDA's Office of Operations Security Control Center – (202) 720-0000
- AMS' Workplace Violence Prevention Program Manager – (202) 720-2374
- [USDA Headquarters Employee Emergency Response Guide](#)

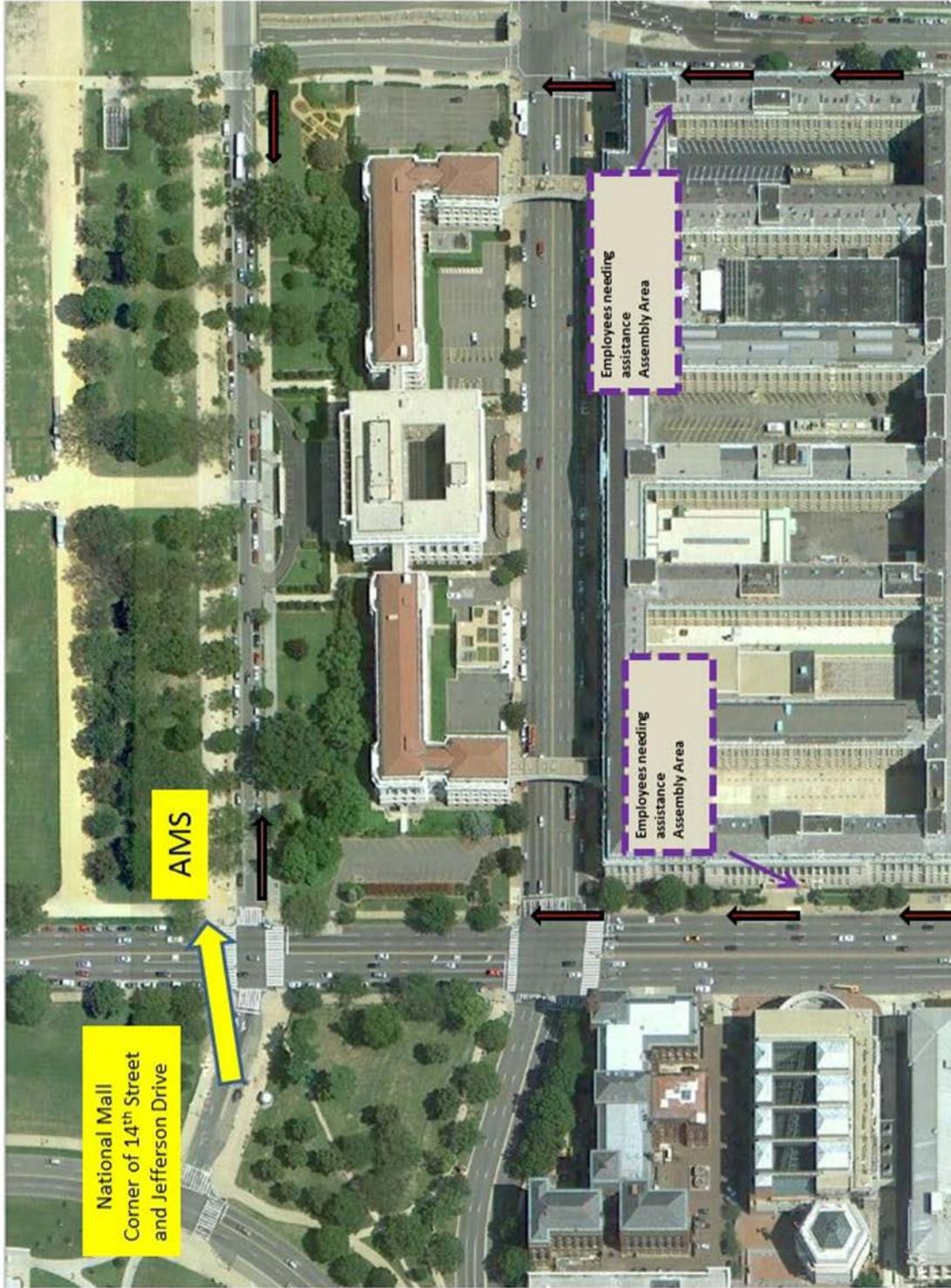
For more information about AMS Field locations specific numbers or what to do if a specific emergency occurs, talk to your supervisor.

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

As an intern if you believe that you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the [AMS Office of Civil Rights](#).

An Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor or mediator will assist you with traditional EEO Counseling or mediation through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). An attempt will be made to bring about a resolution within 30 days. If during counseling, the counselor is unable to accomplish this, and you agree, the time may be extended up to an additional 60 calendar days. If the matter is not resolved by the conclusion of the counseling process, the EEO counselor or mediator will advise you of the procedures for filing a formal complaint. [Find out more about filing an EEO Discrimination Complaint](#).

AMS ASSEMBLY AREA



Exit the building using the nearest stairwell and move quickly to assembly area

Office Closures

There are policies and procedures nonemergency AMS employees are to follow by interns for early dismissal or closure of activities due to emergency conditions. This information applies to snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, air pollution, power failures, interruptions of public transportation, and other situations in which significant numbers of employees/interns are prevented from reporting for work on time or which require offices to close all or part of their activities. Interns are designated as nonemergency employees. “Emergency employees” are defined as those who occupy critical positions that may be vital to public health, safety, welfare, national defense, or the operation of essential facilities or functions. If this definition applies to you, you will be notified in writing by your supervisor.

Interns in the Washington, D. C. Metropolitan Area

When a weather emergency occurs that affects interns working inside the Washington Capital Beltway, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) makes the final decision regarding dismissal of employees and closure of executive agencies. USDA and/or Agency Administrators will make dismissal and closure decisions during non-weather emergencies. Those decisions, including the time of the earliest dismissal, are communicated through the USDA Director of Human Resources Management to the MRP Human Resources (HR) Director. The MRP HR Director will relay this information to APHIS officials for dissemination throughout the Agency. OPM also provides announcements to the media.

Interns located in Field Locations

Field facilities have their own emergency dismissal or closure plans. The offices have designated officials who will notify employees within their geographical areas of early dismissal. Decisions to excuse interns will be based on any one of the following:

- Federal Executive Board declares an emergency for which Federal employees will be excused
- Official public announcement by local, state, or Federal authorities that travel should be avoided
- Advice obtained from MRP Human Resources if the decision cannot be made by any of the above

If you have any questions or concerns about these types of office closures, please talk to your supervisor or refer to Human Resources Desk Guide, [Subchapter 4630](#), Absence and Leave; or the OPM Washington, DC, AREA EMERGENCY DISMISSAL OR CLOSURE PROCEDURES available at:

<https://archive.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2000/dismissal.htm>.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows virtually anyone to request records from any Federal Government Agency. This means that any work and communication performed by AMS employees, interns, contractors, and research and promotion board members, and staff, can be requested for release via a FOIA request. Each Program office has designated at least one staff member as FOIA coordinator for that program office. The FOIA coordinators work with the AMS FOIA Officer to review requested records before they are released in order to determine what information can be legally withheld and released.

If your records and communication become subject to a FOIA request, please work with your FOIA coordinator to collect all potentially responsive records and to identify any information that could cause harm to AMS operations or would violate personal privacy.

All emails sent to and from an intern's work email addresses are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This means that any emails sent or received by an employee could potentially be released, in full, or in part, to members of the media, a non-government organization, or the general public. The FOIA defines an "Agency record" as any information in the Agency's possession at the time a FOIA request is made. As a result of this definition, emails that do not discuss official business, but are in AMS's possession, are also subject to FOIA and will be treated as an Agency record if they are requested.

All email you send or receive must be properly managed on a daily basis. As an AMS intern, it is your responsibility to manage your email!

If you have any questions about email, FOIA, or the proper management of email, please talk with your supervisor.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

In accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, AMS interns are responsible for protecting personal information about individuals that is maintained by AMS from unauthorized access, disclosure, and alteration; and for providing individuals appropriate and complete access to AMS records concerning themselves, including the opportunity to correct any errors in those records.

Protecting PII in Federal systems is critical because its loss or unauthorized disclosure can lead to serious consequences for individuals. These consequences include identity theft or other fraudulent activity, which can result in substantial harm, embarrassment, and inconvenience to those individuals affected.

AMS interns are required to report any lost or stolen IT equipment immediately to the USDA Lost Equipment hotline directly at (888) 926-2373. A second option is to contact the AMS ITS Cyber Security Division hotline at (202) 720-7511.

Appropriate Use of Government Property

Interns have a duty to protect and conserve government property and should not use government property for other than authorized purposes. Government property includes items such as office supplies, telephone and other telecommunications equipment and services, government mail; automated data processes capabilities, printing and reproduction facilities, government records, and government vehicles.

USDA policy provides for limited personal use of government telecommunications equipment on an occasional basis, provided that the use involves minimal expense to the government and does not interfere with official business. Occasional personal use of telecommunications resources shall normally take place during the employee's personal time. [See the Department's policy on personal use of government property.](#)

While the occasional use of telecommunications resources in moderation is acceptable, uses not meeting the USDA policy are strictly prohibited. Interns are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the workplace and to refrain from using telecommunications equipment for activities that are inappropriate or offensive to co-workers or the public, such as sexually explicit materials or remarks that ridicule others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation. Questions concerning appropriate use of government telecommunications equipment should be addressed with your supervisor.

AMS Systems and Applications

Access to AMS Applications

You will access many automated applications during your tenure as an AMS intern. In an effort to reduce the number of IDs and passwords needed, AMS put many of these applications behind an e-Authentication firewall. This means that only **ONE** ID and password is needed to gain access to many applications. Obtaining an e-Authentication ID and password is a process that takes several weeks. Until you receive those credentials, you will not be able to access these types of applications.

Your supervisor or sponsor will help you obtain access to all the program-specific applications you will need to perform your duties. Some applications are used AMS-wide and are accessible by a single sign-on mechanism called your “e-Authentication” or “e-Auth” ID and password.

LincPass: Refer to USDA Identification Credential/Card (LincPass).

E-Authentication

E-Authentication (E-Auth) is a mechanism to grant access to multiple online programs (WebTA, AgLearn, GovTrip, eOPF, EPP) with a single ID and password. Depending on your appointment type, you may receive E-Auth access. Your supervisor will assist you with acquiring an E-Auth account if applicable.

All USDA intern, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary, must complete an annual “Information Systems Security Awareness” training. Access to any USDA computer system cannot be granted by the IT staff until the new employee has successfully passed (70%) this training.

Note: Your E-Authentication account may take up to 3 weeks after your start date to be created. Creation of the account typically coincides with the issuance of your first paycheck (**for paid Interns only**).

Instructions:

- You will receive an email from the E-Authentication server, 3 weeks after receiving your first paycheck. The email will invite you to register your E-Authentication account. Embedded in the email is a link that you will click on to take you to the registration page.
- If you have not received the email and at least 3 weeks have passed since receipt of your first paycheck, you can inform your supervisor. Request that your E-Auth registration email be sent, and provide your Government email address.
- When you click on the embedded link in the email, you will be taken to the registration page and can follow the instructions to complete the registration.
- After you have registered your E-Authentication account, with your E-Authentication credentials, you should be able to log into AgLearn as well as the many other applications that are password protected.

Time and Attendance (T&A) Records

Interns work according to an approved schedule. Paid Interns will receive access to the Time and Attendance System (Web TA), in which case they will electronically fill out, submit their time, attendance, and leave requests to their supervisor for approval. Access to the Web TA system is based upon tenure of the position. Details about time and attendance will be discussed during orientation.

Tour of Duty

The standard tour of duty for a full-time employee is a 40-hour basic work week consisting of 5 days for 8 hours each day, Monday through Friday. Your supervisor will determine your work schedule based upon your program needs. However, there are several flexibilities available. Typically, internship positions include 8-hour work days, Monday-Friday. The AMS participates in various types of work schedules including compressed and flexible schedules. These types of schedules must be discussed and approved by your supervisor.

AgLearn

AgLearn is “the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) enterprise-wide learning management system (LMS).” The program allows both you and your supervisor to plan and monitor much of your Agency-directed training, as well as offers you a wide selection of online courses.

AgLearn is an invaluable tool.

Instructions:

1. Access AgLearn at <http://www.aglearn.usda.gov/> and click on “Learner Login.”
2. Log in, using your e-Authentication User ID and password.

When you first log into AgLearn you will see that you have some courses already populated on your “To Do” List.

AgLearn Features

AgLearn is much more than just a website you go to for mandatory online training.

- AgLearn offers a wealth of other educational resources—including an extensive online book collection, available free to all employees.
- It has more than 12,000 book titles available online. When you log in through your “Learner Login” and select the “Key Resources: Books/Videos/Etc.” tab, you will see icons for the three book collections: Business Pro, ITPro, and Office Essentials. If you have ever been nagged by a troublesome software problem, visit the Office Topics or IT and Technical Topics collections for complete reference books, quick reference guides, or even tutorials on a particular subject.
- AgLearn offers courses to improve your management skills, or just freshen your thinking about leadership.
- AgLearn provides an electronic registration and training approval tool in AMS. When you register for a course in AgLearn, an email will be sent to your supervisor asking him/her to approve your registration.

AMS Intern Strategies for Success

USDA and AMS Intern Events

USDA and AMS establishes several events each year for interns to participate in, such as; Career/Intern Day, webinars, workshops, panel events, ethics training, communication workshops, flash mentoring, career exploration events, etc. Specific schedules of these events will be sent via email as well as posted on the USDA website and the *AMS Voice*. For information regarding events for interns, please contact 202-720-0583.

Pathway Program Training and Development Plan

The purpose of USDA Pathways training and development plan is to facilitate the design and implementation of career and professional development for USDA Interns. The USDA Pathways Students and Recent Graduates Training Plans cover a period of at least two years for students and at least one year for recent graduates. The plan is intended to be used in conjunction with your individual development plan. Both plans can be found in AgLearn by searching for Student Trainee Training Plan and Recent Graduates Training Plan.

The USDA Student Intern and Recent Graduate Training Plans consist of a combination of orientation, self-assessment, mentoring, shadowing, on-the-job training, and web-based training. USDA Student Interns and Recent Graduates will be required to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that will serve as a career and developmental training guide. The purpose of the IDP is to have the Intern and Recent Graduate work with their supervisor to develop an individual training plan specific to the position and Agency. Both the IDP and the USDA Training Plan will be aligned with the mission and goals of the Department.

Pathway Performance Evaluation Policy

A performance work plan is a written document that identifies critical elements of an employee's position and the standards by which that employee will be rated. A critical element is a work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that the employee's overall performance is at the unacceptable or "Results Not Achieved" level. USDA Interns and supervisors will collaboratively determine the Intern's evaluation elements. These elements should be tied to the Intern's IPD and the Agency's mission. Performance evaluations are conducted in accordance with USDA Directive 4040-430.

Each year, USDA interns are evaluated to ensure that USDA Interns receive a meaningful experience. Before August of each year, please participate in the USDA Internship Survey that is most applicable to your appointment type to provide feedback on the program. All USDA Interns should complete the USDA Intern Survey and all USDA Recent Graduates and Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) should complete the survey for recent graduates and PMFs. Your feedback will be used to help improve the program for future participants. The survey will be emailed each year from the Virtual University, Office of Human Resource Management.

Summer Intern Training

Given the summer Intern's short tenure with USDA, it is highly suggested that summer Interns set achievable goals when completing their Individual Development Plan (IDP). The objective of creating an IDP is to focus on 1-3 core competencies that the Intern would like to develop during their internship and then identify actionable items to achieve and demonstrate development of it. A sample IDP Worksheet is located at the end of this guide. Moreover, an optional Summer Intern Training Curriculum for Summer Interns has been developed in an effort to maximize the internship experience. The optional Summer Intern Training Curriculum can also be found at the end of this guide. Summer Interns are encouraged to complete at least five courses, found in AgLearn, and work on no more than one course per week.

Creation of an Intern IDP

USDA Interns will be offered several learning opportunities through their experience at USDA. It is the responsibility of each USDA Intern to take advantage of the dynamic training opportunities.

The Intern should:

- Participate in onboarding and orientation activities
- Complete and implement an Individual Development Plan within the first few days of his/her entrance on duty date
- Participate in a mentoring event or experience
- Participate in at least a one ½ day rotational assignment (optional and contingent on supervisory approval)
- A 4-6 month rotational assignment is mandatory for Presidential Management Fellows (PMF)
- Participate in at least a ½ day shadowing experience.
- Complete at least 40 hours of AgLearn training as outlined in the USDA Student Trainee Training Plan and Recent Graduates Training Plan; (Pathway Interns only)
- Presidential Management Fellows have the autonomy to choose 80 hours of career specific training, in AgLearn, per year over a 2-year period for a total of 160 hours of training. (Please be sure to print out a certificate of completion for your records)
- Participate in agency-wide and department-wide training opportunities

Monitoring, Self-Assessment and Performance Feedback

All interns will receive some form of performance feedback from their supervisors. The feedback is intended to provide the Intern with highlights of strengths and areas that may need improvement. The level of performance feedback will depend on your appointment type and length. Please feel free to discuss your IDP progress with your supervisor and/or at your mid- and end-of-term evaluations. There are ways to assess your own performance as well. In fact, a self-assessment is highly encouraged.

Mentoring Opportunities

Mentoring has a long history as an integral part of USDA and its culture. The focus of mentoring is on fostering career relationships and exchanging career information between mentor and protégé. Mentoring provides employees with opportunities to form new connections, broaden employee experiences, assist in developing goals, and cultivate new opportunities. USDA strongly encourages all USDA Interns to participate in the USDA Mentoring Program. Participation in the USDA Mentoring Program is required for Pathways participants who are on board for 90 days or more. Mentoring Coordinators are the manager of mentoring for designating areas. They are responsible for planning and coordinating marketing activities; participating in matching of mentors and protégés; training mentors and protégés; monitoring mentoring relationships, assessing mentoring effectiveness, and developing improvements. Mentors and protégés are encouraged to use the [USDA Mentoring Portal](#), an online database to apply for the opportunity to participate in mentoring.

Appendix

STUDENT INTERN WELCOME CHECKLIST

Employee: _____
 Reporting Date: _____
 Reporting From: _____

- ___ APHIS HR orientation completed? Tax Forms
- ___ [ID Card, Acceptable Forms of Identification](#)
- ___ [HRO- 1197 Background Investigation Supplement](#)
- ___ Network/E-mail Systems Administrator notified? User ID/account form completed?
 ___ E-mail: AMS IT Help Desk, 202-720-1111
 ___ **Add to All AMS Student Interns**
- ___ I-Phone: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ Desk telephone and Voice-mail set up: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ AMS, Team AMS, Employee Resources: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/employee-resources>
- ___ The AMS Voice: To receive the AMS Voice, AMS’s weekly e-newsletter, please subscribe
 at: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAMS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USDAAMS_42
- ___ **E-Authentication ID and password – IMPORTANT** to register when you receive e-mail in **3-5 weeks**
- ___ AgLearn Overview: <http://www.aglearn.usda.gov/>
- ___ Transit Subsidy Benefits: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ Keys for office and desk drawers: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ Basic Supplies: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ Intern Emergency Kit ___ Occupant Emergency Plan: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**
- ___ Organizational Charts: AMS and/or Program-level: **See Supervisor and/or Program RMO**

FOR PATHWAY STUDENTS ONLY

Please see your Supervisor and/or Program RMO for assistance

- ___ Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF): <https://eopf.nbc.gov/landing/>
- ___ NFC EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PAGE -- Please register on your first Pay Day:
<https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/index.aspx>
- ___ Position Description
- ___ Performance Plan and Performance Rating: **See supervisor**
- ___ Basic Tour of Duty Form MRP-346 to timekeeper:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/mrp346.doc>
- ___ WebTA

Burt McKittrick, 202-205-3843;
Burton.McKittrick@ams.usda.gov
 Tammy Wilson, 202-720-3198;
Tamera.Wilson@ams.usda.gov

2017 Department-Wide Summer Activities for All USDA Interns

Event Title	Date/Time	Location	RSVP Required
USDA Intern Listening Session	June 6, 2017 @ 11:15 am-12:30 pm	Whitten Building, Room 107A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
USDA Intern Welcome Event	June 27, 2017 @ 12 pm-1:30 pm	Whitten Building, Whitten Patio	No RSVP Required
Ethics Training	June 21, 2017 @ 1:15 pm-2:30 pm	Whitten Building, Room 107A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
USDA Coaching Seminar for USDA Interns	June 28, 2017 @ 11:15 am- 1pm	Whitten Building, Room 108A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
Resume Writing for USDA Interns	July 12, 2017 @ 11:15 am-12:30 pm	Whitten Building, Room 108A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
Flash Mentoring Event for USDA Interns	July 19, 2017 @ 1:50 pm-3: 30 pm	South Building, Back of Cafeteria	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
Financial Literacy Workshop for USDA Interns	July 25, 2017 @ 12:45 pm-3pm	Whitten Building, Room 108A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov
USDA Intern Listening Session	August 1, 2017 @ 10:50 am-12 pm	Whitten Building, Room 107A	RSVP carol.scott@dm.usda.gov

Student Intern Housing Subsidy

SUMMER INTERNS HIRED UNDER THE PATHWAYS PROGRAM: Authorizing officials may choose to provide a subsidy for housing expenses to these summer interns, based on agency needs and funding availability. If a housing subsidy is approved, the form HRO 343SH, Housing Subsidy Request for the Summer Intern Program, must be completed. The form may be found by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/hro343sh.pdf>

The form (HRO 343SH) is completed to request payment for the cost of the housing, including base utilities (if applicable). This cost should not exceed the average rental cost of a one bedroom apartment within your geographical area. If the housing costs exceed the average for your geographic area, please state the reasons for the overage in the space provided at the bottom of Part III, Subsidy Information, of the HRO 343SH.

Please do not include any travel expenses on this form. The agency does not reimburse the student for laundry/dry cleaning, internet or cable charges. In addition, lodging expenses such as long distance phone calls, refrigerator or microwave rental, etc. are not reimbursable.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM HRO 343SH

PART I, Agency Information

Boxes 1-4: Identifying information.

Box 5: T&A Contact Point Number – Identification number for your timekeeper. Located in webTA and managed by the timekeeper.

Box 6: Name of Approving Official – Person who will sign the bottom of the form. This is usually the student's supervisor.

PART II, Employee Information

Box 7: Please enter the employees name as it appears in the NFC database - no nick names.

Box 8: The last four digits of the social security number.

Box 9: Completed only if the student is to be reimbursed for the housing payment. Sometimes these payments are sent directly to the vendor (i.e. hotel, apartment, etc.). If the payment for lodging is to be sent to the student, please include a copy of the bill from the vendor, or a receipt showing it has already been paid in full.

Mail Paper Check to: Provide the lodging information such as the full name and complete address of the hotel, apartment, etc. The paper check will be sent to the address provided here.

Boxes 10-11: Employment and duty station information.

Box 12: Tax withholding information - deductions for Federal and State taxes.

PART III, Subsidy Information

Box 13: Net amount of money to be paid for the housing.

Box 14: FMMI shorthand code (SHC) used to make the payment. We cannot process any payments without this code.

Agricultural Marketing Service Intern Programs

Name of Program	Duration
Conference On Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL)	10 weeks, summer
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)	10 weeks, summer; 15 weeks fall & spring semesters
Operation Warfighter	Varies
Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)	10 week, summer; 15 weeks fall/spring
USDA 1890 National Scholars Program	Up to four years
Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS)	May 29th- July 26th
Workforce Recruitment	Varies
Wounded Warrior Program	Varies