



AgLearn

AgLearn Strategic Business Plan

FY 2023-2027

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY

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Introduction

Background

Employee Development is one of the key factors to recruiting and retaining a high-performing workforce. An enterprise learning management system (LMS) along with shared e-learning services helps contribute to USDA’s employee development needs. USDA’s Agriculture Learning (AgLearn) provides a common centralized LMS and e-learning services that enable USDA to maximize the return on taxpayer investment.

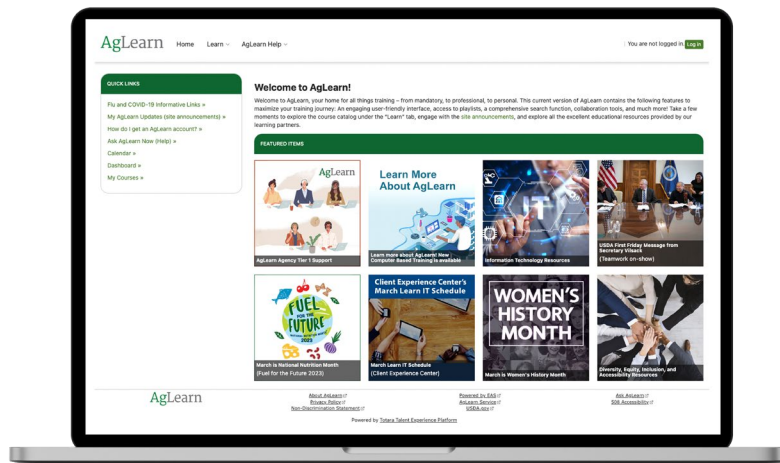
AgLearn is USDA’s system for managing training records and other training activities. AgLearn supports approximately 140,000 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) users and 7 external Federal agency partners.

Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices use AgLearn to find, enroll, record, and report on all training activities. AgLearn has a robust, accessible, and secure environment to accommodate approximately 140,000 end users, 2,000 administrators and 30 unique agencies.

Since its inception in 2004, AgLearn has provided training to more than 400,000 users and processed approximately 18 million online course completions. AgLearn supports 7 external Federal agency clients: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Division of Grants Workforce, U.S. AbilityOne Commission (AbilityOne), Equal Employee Opportunity Commission (EEOC), U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM), Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB), and Peace Corps.

Powered by Totara Talent Experience Platform and hosted on AWS GovCloud (US), AgLearn provides an industry leading learning platform. AgLearn partners with external vendors such as LinkedIn Learning, Skillsoft, Dmason Financial, and Rosetta Stone to provide high-quality eLearning content to USDA employees and external partners. A list of all external vendor partners is included in Appendix D.

AgLearn resides the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Digital Infrastructure Services Center (DISC) organizational structure. AgLearn utilizes DISC resources to manage agreements and contracts.



About the Budget

AgLearn's budget for FY 2023 is approximately \$9 million. AgLearn receives no appropriated funding. All revenue is derived from 24 USDA Inter-Agency Agreements and 7 non-USDA external Federal agency clients to fund the AgLearn program. Funding covers software licenses, course libraries, hosting, Tier 1 help desk support for users, Tier 2 help support for agency AgLearn administrators, and course development software and expertise.

Return on Investment and Cost Avoidance

AgLearn measures its return on investment using the following data points:

- ▶ Set up, management, and reporting of mandatory courses
- ▶ Completed courses vs. in-person
- ▶ SF-182 processing costs
- ▶ Individual and Executive Development Plan (IDP/EDP) administration costs
- ▶ Reports – number of reports utilized

In FY 2022, customers saved about \$9M by leveraging the AgLearn program and avoided \$43.2M in direct expenses.
This resulted in an overall 398% return on investment.

Further details on AgLearn's return on investment can be found in Appendix C.

AgLearn Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals

Background

To begin establishing the AgLearn 5-year Strategic Plan, AgLearn Federal and contract staff held strategic planning sessions in September 2022. The outcome of the planning session was a refined mission, vision, as well as three strategic goals. AgLearn's three strategic goals nicely align with four of the USDA IT Strategic Goals¹. AgLearn also aligns with Goal 6 in the USDA Strategic Plan FY2022 – 2026: *Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA*².

Mission

AgLearn strives to be the central, collaborative training environment for USDA's dynamic workforce. With robust training tools that are accessible, flexible, and user-friendly, AgLearn aims to deliver high-quality professional and personal learning opportunities.

Vision

Build awareness and change the perception of AgLearn from being about mandatory training to being a one-stop shop for employees' personal and professional development.

Strategic Goals

Improve Customer Experience and Leadership Support of the AgLearn Platform

- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 1: Accelerate Digital Transformation](#)
- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 2: Drive Innovation in Support of USDA Mission](#)

Expand Functionality and eLearning Content Offerings

- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 2: Drive Innovation in Support of USDA Mission](#)
- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 3: Improve IT Organizational Agility with a Skilled Workforce](#)
- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 4: Enable Data Driven Decision-Making](#)

Expand Customer Base across the Federal Space

- ▶ [USDA IT Strategic Goal 3: Improve IT Organizational Agility with a Skilled Workforce](#)

¹ [USDA IT Strategic Plan FY22 to FY26](#)

² [USDA Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026](#)

GOAL ONE: Improve Customer Experience and Leadership support of the AgLearn Platform

Customer Experience Functions

The following functions and activities have been prioritized by the AgLearn team for improving customer experience.

- ▶ Enhance system usability such as the ability to do more intuitive searches for content.
- ▶ Reduce required downtime associated with annual upgrades from two weeks to 4 days.
- ▶ Improve the timeliness and quality of HR data in AgLearn.

Leadership Support Functions

The following functions and activities have been prioritized by the AgLearn team for improving customer experience.

- ▶ Conduct usability studies such as improving search capabilities.
- ▶ Change the perception of AgLearn from just “mandatory training” to a one-stop shop for personal and professional development. A communications plan was developed to help support this activity. The communications plan is in Appendix A.
- ▶ Continue to provide full support during the annual Contingency Planning exercises.

GOAL TWO: Expand eLearning Content Offerings and Functionality beyond eLearning

Expand eLearning Content Offerings

AgLearn is committed to improving the experience of users through increased functionality and expanded content offerings. Below are activities that have been identified over the next 3-5 years.

- ▶ Implement an annual course catalog analysis.
- ▶ Expand course development offerings to current and future clients.
- ▶ Explore and add, if appropriate, new eLearning content vendors.

Expand Functionality Beyond an eLearning Platform

While AgLearn is an award-winning e-learning platform, it offers capabilities beyond e-learning. Below are capabilities of AgLearn that the program staff will be evaluating for possible implementation.

- ▶ Mentoring Solution offering tied to LMS offerings and assessment tools.
- ▶ Ability to stream all hands meetings.
- ▶ Provide agencies with the capability to implement permanent and ad-hoc approval workflows to support additional operational functionality.

Table 1: Timeline/ Roadmap for Improvement and Expansion Priorities

FY23 -24	FY25	FY26	FY27
▶ Reduce required downtime associated with annual upgrades	▶ Enhance System Usability	▶ Enhance System Usability	▶ Implement an annual course catalog analysis
▶ Enhance System Usability	▶ Expand course development offerings	▶ Improve the timeliness and quality of HR data	▶ Enhance System Usability
▶ Explore, and add, if appropriate new eLearning content vendors	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 1: The table details an estimated time for improvements and expansion for the AgLearn platform over the years of FY23 to FY27.

GOAL THREE: Expand Customer Base across the Federal Space

Historical Financial

AgLearn has grown considerably, both internally to USDA and in support of external clients, over the last decade. The chart below displays AgLearn’s revenue growth from its external clients.

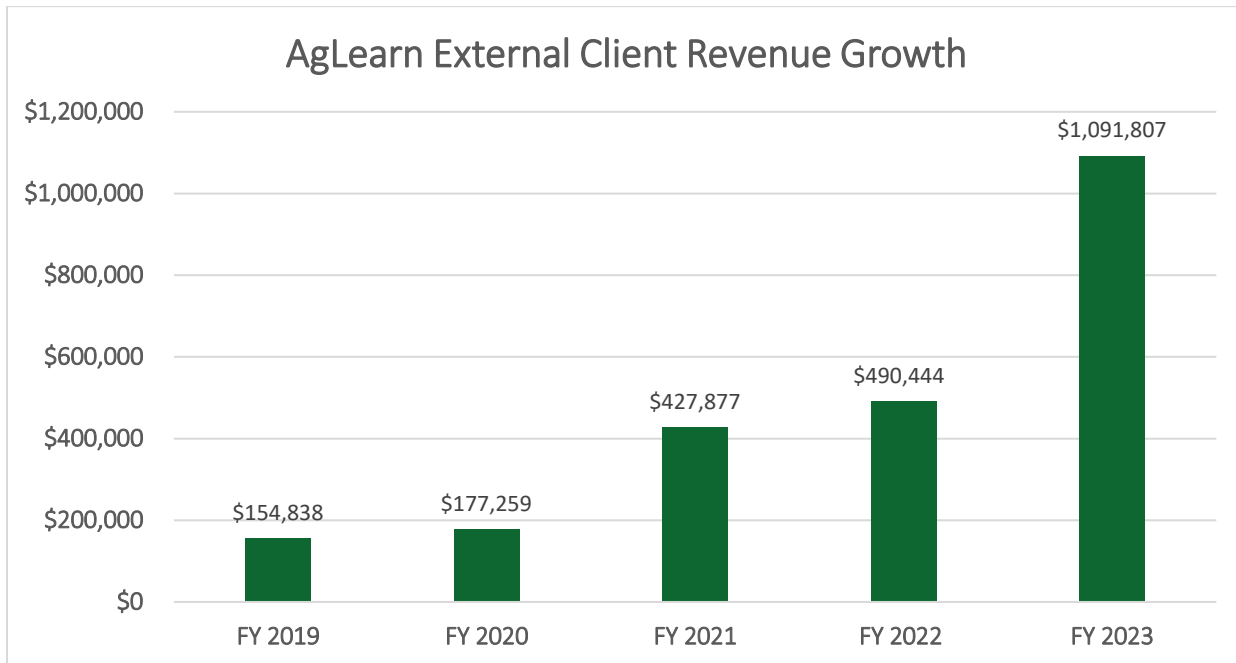


Figure 1: In FY 2019, AgLearn’s external client revenue was \$154,838. In FY 2020, it was \$177,259. In FY 2021, it was \$422,877. In FY 2022, it was \$490,444.40. In FY 2023, it is \$1,091,807. For additional details see Appendix D.

AgLearn’s course development grew approximately 37% over the last 5 years.

Course development services include Section 508 remediation and testing. This is due to the increase in mandatory training requirements and the highlighted importance of Section 508 compliance. AgLearn continues to market and expanded these services both to internal and external clients.

Target Market

AgLearn is open to onboarding clients of any size and complexity if the appropriate resourcing, leadership support, and processes are in place. Given past experience with ramp-up time, onboarding, and user support, AgLearn targets clients with the following characteristics:

- ▶ Federal Department or agency
- ▶ Average user population of 10,000 or less
- ▶ Commitment to improving their LMS program
- ▶ Unstable security posture in their existing LMS allowing for AgLearn’s Authority To Operate / FedRAMP status to improve client security
- ▶ Ability to align onboarding to the USDA Identity Credential, and Access Management solutions offerings (Authentication & PIV Capable)

AgLearn can comfortably onboard 2-3 clients of this size and scope annually. However, if a larger, more complex, Department-level customer were to be onboarded, this would require the full team’s attention and eliminate any capacity to onboard the targeted clients as described above. The program developed a Federal Staffing Plan (Appendix B) to facilitate the future growth and support needs of the platform.



Growth Projections

As stated, AgLearn can onboard 2-3 new clients annually, of the size and scope described above, if provided appropriate resourcing for onboarding and support. Again, if a large client (either in size or complexity) is onboarded, that one new client will take the full attention of the team and limit the ability to onboard additional small prospects.

AgLearn's estimated budget for FY 2024 and FY2025 is approximately \$9 million. If AgLearn onboards a large Federal agency such as HHS, its budget will need to increase proportional to the user population. If AgLearn adds two small to medium size agencies over FY 2024 and 2025 and not a large Federal agency, its budget would proportionally increase to the additional user population.

AgLearn utilizes multiple DISC support services contracts for its contractor support staff including Totara Learning. These vehicles are multi-year contracts and allow for greater flexibility for contract modification if AgLearn onboards a new external Federal client. Based on the current well-regarded support model and service level, a contract staffing matrix is in place to support potential growth.

These factors include the agency's:

- ▶ LMS knowledge,
- ▶ Current support staff, levels of support staff (T1/2/3),
- ▶ Anticipated support levels,
- ▶ Desire to continue current support model and modes,
- ▶ And population size (For example, having DISC contract Tier 1 support with phone, email and ticket access is a sizable difference to having the customer staff Tier 1, and AgLearn staff Tier 2 with tickets only).

Appendix A. Communications Plan

Overview

AgLearn is the official system of record for all training in USDA providing an industry leading learning management system (LMS) powered by Totara Talent Experience Platform. AgLearn provides the capability to manage the Standard Form (SF)-182, Executive Development Plan (EDP), and Individual Development Plan (IDP) processes through its entire approval cycle; it provides online administration of mobile-friendly curriculum by trainers, individualized training capabilities, online registration, uniform content, collaborative tools, integrated back-end systems, and robust reporting.

AgLearn supports external learning platforms such as Skillssoft-Percipio, LinkedIn Learning, Rosetta Stone, and Dmason Financial. AgLearn provides the capability to maintain training cost records within a central location for easy access and reporting.

Overall, AgLearn contains software licenses, course libraries, hosting, Tier 1 help desk support for users, Tier 2 help support for agency AgLearn administrators, and course development software and expertise. Its ongoing mission is to serve as USDA's hub for all things mandatory training, professional development, and personal enrichment for all end users.

AgLearn continues to serve as a hub for training for USDA and current external Federal agency clients. AgLearn plans to target future external Federal agency clients and expand its service offerings. These are identified in the AgLearn FY 2023 to FY2027 Strategic Business Plan.

Communication Goal

Change the perception of AgLearn as a nuisance only for mandatory training to being a one-stop shop for employees' personal and professional development. The AgLearn team, in partnership with the Office of Human Resources Management and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights identified the following objectives to meet this goal:

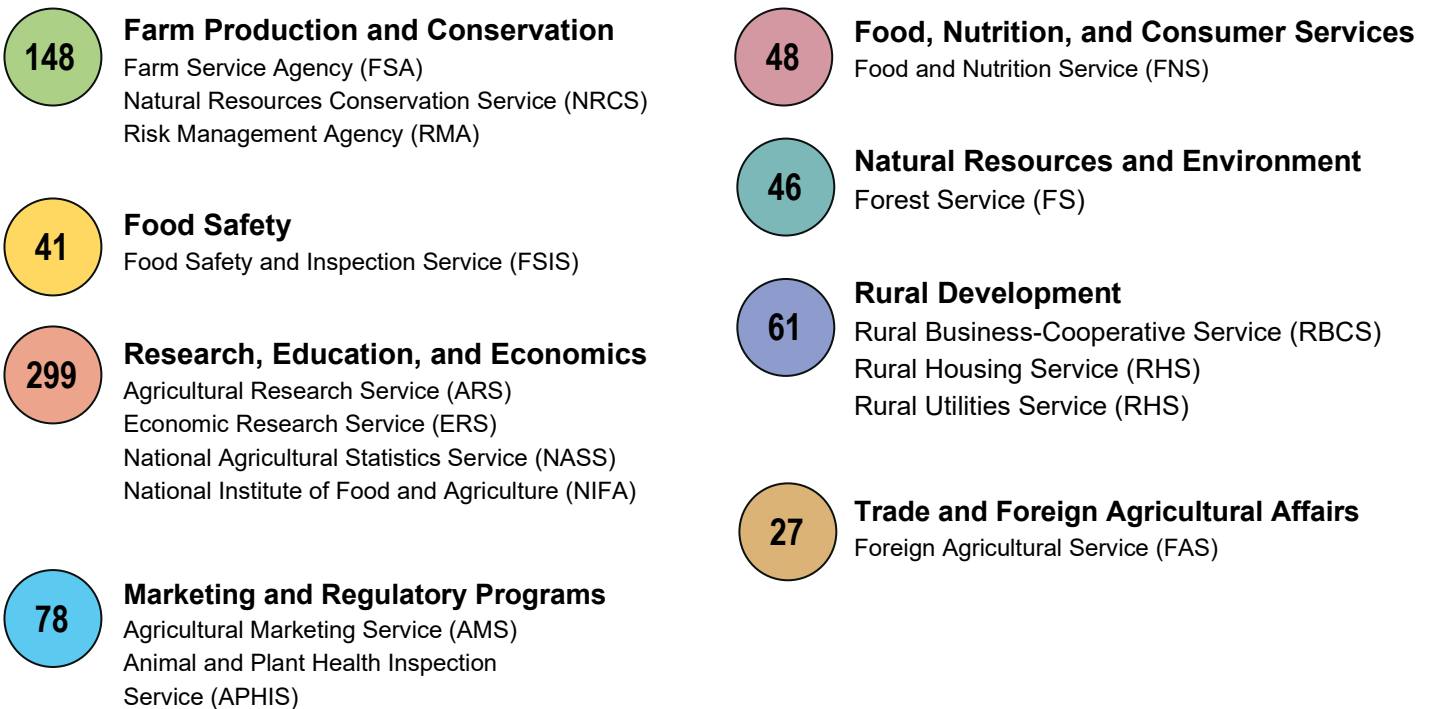
- ▶ Develop frequently asked questions (FAQs), flyers, and other tools describing the differences between Federal mandatory, agency required, and elective training.
- ▶ Develop broader distribution channels to communicate marketing materials.
- ▶ Increase AgLearn visibility across USDA's intranet and internet sites.
- ▶ Expand promotion of AgLearn in the Secretary's Announcements

Challenges

The AgLearn user base, is dispersed across the world with varying access to technology, creating unique challenges.

- ▶ In the past, AgLearn relied on a USDA generated email list to distribute pertinent information. **The ability to send department-wide emails to USDA was revoked in 2018**, and this policy change limited the ability to communicate with the broader AgLearn user population.
- ▶ **Each agency or office within the USDA has independent methods of communicating to their employees.** Therefore, in addition to providing learning, event information and resources on the AgLearn homepage, AgLearn relies on its points of contacts, or AgLearn Leads to act as conduits for their agency or office to ensure they deliver AgLearn information and resources with their subordinates.

Number of Unique Services per Mission Area



Current Strategies

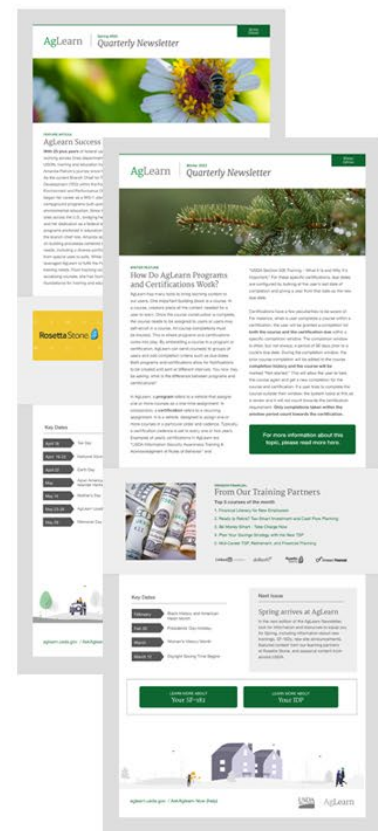
- ▶ **Occupational marketing**
Using the Salesforce Marketing Cloud journey email tool, AgLearn can target users within a specific occupational job code. Users receive journeys via email and can access direct links to courses and resources relevant to their professional and personal development while also highlighting the value of AgLearn beyond mandatory training.
- ▶ **Site announcements**
These public-facing site announcements provide curated AgLearn typically around a commemorative day or month (e.g., Black History Month, Earth Day, etc.). The purpose is to provide all AgLearn users with relevant and timely content, for both their professional and personal growth.
- ▶ **AgLearn Quarterly Newsletter**
The AgLearn Newsletter returned in July 2022 with the aim of improving employee engagement. The newsletter highlights upskill and training opportunities AgLearn offers, particularly through partners like LinkedIn Learning, Skillssoft-Percipio, Dmason Financial, and Rosetta Stone. There are also feature user stories that personalize how AgLearn supports professional and personal growth. Salesforce Marketing Cloud is being leveraged to gather user engagement data to facilitate the growth and ongoing improvement of the AgLearn Newsletter.
- ▶ **LinkedIn Learning promotions**
Using LinkedIn Learning’s homepage promotion tool, USDA employees can directly utilize courses, videos, and learning paths USDA branding. The USDA branded LinkedIn Learning homepage is leveraged to promote resources useful to end users, IDP development, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and human-centered design.
- ▶ **AgLearn Agency Leads engagement**
Team AgLearn hosts monthly AgLearn Agency Leads meetings. These meetings are used to inform AgLearn Agency Leads about any new technology and policy updates, highlight upcoming trainings, and communications promotions. The frequency is intended to cultivate ongoing conversation with the Admin Leads while providing a space to address questions about effective administration of AgLearn.



Occupational Flyers



Site Announcements



AgLearn Newsletter

Future Engagement Strategies and Options

Many end users with access to AgLearn are unaware of the training and learning resources available to them. The following strategies are geared toward exposing AgLearn's resources to broader ranges of audiences across a variety of communications channels:

- ▶ **Link AgLearn resources to system wide mandatory training communications.**
- ▶ Highlight AgLearn and its offerings on **OneUSDA**.
- ▶ **Collaborate with Office of Communications, Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Office of Human Resources Management** to add AgLearn topic promotions in Secretary and Deputy messages (First Friday).
- ▶ **Promote AgLearn across USDA agency and office newsletters** (e.g., Inside the Forest Service).
- ▶ **Host Lunch and Learn sessions** on topics such as:
 - EDP/IDP creation, approval, and submission
 - SF-182s
 - Find Courses in AgLearn
 - How to be a lead administrator
- ▶ **Conduct studies on usability and system functionality to uncover areas that can be improved.** Usability studies will include a variety of methods including surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with a varied audience from training officers, lead administrators, and end-users.
- ▶ **Broaden current email distribution** beyond AgLearn agency lead administrators and other points of contact.
- ▶ Create AgLearn resources corner on **OHRM SharePoint site**.
- ▶ **Collaborate with USDA training officers and external Federal agency** client points of contact to spread engagement.

Appendix B. Federal Staffing Plan FY 2024-2027

Position Title, Grade, Roles and Responsibilities	Details
<p>Program Manager Lead GS-15 Investment manager. Lead Program Area meetings for Federal AgLearn staff. Lead on AgLearn budget. Overall responsibility for implementing AgLearn Strategic Plan. Represent AgLearn on high level DISC, OCIO, USDA and Federal meetings. Overall responsibility for customer agreements.</p>	<p>Existing Position Funding: 100% by USDA IAAs Year Proposed: Current</p>
<p>Program Manager (Deputy) GS-14 Main COR for AgLearn contracts. Update and manage AgLearn Strategic Plan. Work with Program Lead on implementing AgLearn Strategic Plan. Represent AgLearn on USDA high level meetings such as USDA Training Officers Consortium and DISC, OCIO, USDA and Federal meetings whenever Program Lead is unavailable or Program Lead delegates. Manage Change Control Board. Manage internal and external marketing/communications. Work with Program Lead on CPIC requirements. Lead USDA Federal Mandatory training efforts.</p>	<p>Existing Position Funding: 100% by USDA IAAs Year Proposed: Current</p>
<p>Program Manager GS-14 Manage security requirements, SSO integrations, and ATO. Lead on HR Data requirements. Lead on Service Desk. Manage onboarding/offboarding of external clients. Lead on technical initiatives for AgLearn support contract staff.</p>	<p>Existing Position Funding: 100% by USDA IAAs Year Proposed Onboarding: Current</p>
<p>Project Manager GS-9/11/12 (promotion up to a 13) Manage projects for security, HR data and, integrations working with Program Manager (Technical Lead). Work with AgLearn contract team on Service Desk projects. Manage small and medium implementation and maintenance of external clients.</p>	<p>Proposed Position Funding: 60% by external clients; 40% by USDA IAAs Year Proposed Onboarding: FY 24</p>
<p>Project Manager GS-9/11/12 (promotion potential to a 13) Manage small and medium implementation and maintenance of external clients. Update and manage AgLearn Departmental Regulation. Work with Program Manager (Deputy) to update and manage AgLearn Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Proposed Position Funding: 60% by external clients; 40% funded by USDA IAAs Year Proposed: FY 2024</p>

Appendix C. Return on Investment

Description	Potential Costs (by not using AgLearn)
Setup of Mandatory Courses # Number of mandatory courses x estimated support hours to develop/maintain each course x hourly labor cost rate	\$31K
Completed Courses in AgLearn vs. In-person # Number of courses in AgLearn x estimated time saved using AgLearn (.33 per course) x hourly labor cost rate	\$33.5M
SF-182 Processing Costs # Number of SF-182 in AgLearn x estimated time saved using AgLearn (1.03 hours per SF-182) x hourly labor cost rate	\$312K
Individual Development Plan (IDP) Administration Costs # Number of IDPs entered into AgLearn x estimated time saved using AgLearn (1 hour per IDP assumed) x hourly labor cost rate	\$2.4M
Reporting # Number of Reports run from AgLearn x estimated time saved using AgLearn (.33 hour per report assumed) x hourly labor cost rate	\$7M
Total Savings:	\$43.2M

Appendix D. External Client Revenue (graph totals)

Client	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Institute for Library and Museum Services*	\$18,875	\$18,875	\$20,515	\$0	\$0
AbilityOne	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,832
USAGM	\$50,539	\$66,778	\$73,239	\$91,789	\$91,789
DNFSB	\$27,394	\$33,575	\$33,334	\$33,967	\$35,246
EEOC	\$0	\$0	\$95,000	\$73,371	\$79,997
EXIM	\$58,030	\$58,030	\$57,544	\$57,728	\$58,502
HHS, GMTA	\$0	\$0	\$148,245	\$233,589	\$93,489
Peace Corps	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$412,624
HHS, OASH	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$294,328
Totals	\$154,838	\$177,259	\$427,877	\$490,444	\$1,091,807

*Institute for Library and Museum Services ended their agreement with AgLearn on September 30, 2021, due to lack of funding.