**Subject:** USDA Reorganization
**Date:** Wednesday, October 14, 2026 at 3:57:36 PM Eastern Daylight Time
**From:** The Office of the Secretary - OSEC
**To:** The Office of the Secretary - OSEC
**Attachments:** Outlook-uda1c0j3.png

# DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

This message is for USDA employees within the Agricultural Research Service; United States Forest Service; Food and Nutrition Administration; Research, Education, and Economics mission area; Foreign Agricultural Service; Rural Development mission area; Farm Production and Conservation mission area; Office of the General Counsel; and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

On October 13, 2026, in *American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, et al. v. United States Department of Agriculture*, Case No. 26-cv-09976-VC (N.D. Calif.), the Court ordered the following:

In light of the foregoing, and pursuant to this Court's authority to "issue all necessary and appropriate process to postpone the effective date of an agency action or to preserve status or rights," 5 U.S.C. § 705, it is hereby ordered that:

Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Defendants USDA and USDA Secretary Rollins and their officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and all persons acting by, through, under, or in concert with the defendants, are **enjoined and stayed from closing or consolidating the resources or locations of any ARS laboratory or facility including the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center**. The defendants are further **enjoined from relocating or reassigning the employees or their positions or functions for any such ARS laboratory or facility to different and/or new locations outside the local commuting area**, including by issuing or enforcing "management directed reassignment" (MDR) letters or any other notice or directive of reassignment or relocation in whole or in part, including any deadlines in those letters.

United States Forest Service. Defendants USDA and USDA Secretary Rollins and their officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and all persons acting by, through, under, or in concert with the defendants, are **enjoined and stayed from (a) closing or eliminating offices or (b) relocating or reassigning employees or their positions or functions to different and/or new locations outside the local commuting area**, including by issuing or enforcing MDR letters or any other notice or directive of reassignment or relocation in whole or in part, including any deadlines in those letters at the Forest Service.

Remaining USDA Components Challenged by the Plaintiffs' Motion. Defendants USDA and USDA Secretary Rollins and their officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and all persons acting by, through, under, or in concert with the defendants, are **enjoined and stayed from (a) closing or eliminating offices or (b) relocating or reassigning employees or their positions or functions to different and/or new locations outside the local commuting area**, including by issuing or enforcing MDR letters or any other notice or directive of reassignment or relocation in whole or in part, including any deadlines in those letters at the: Food and Nutrition Administration; Research, Education, and Economics mission area; Foreign Agricultural Service; Rural Development mission area; Farm Production and Conservation mission area; Office of the General Counsel; and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

Notwithstanding the foregoing**, this order does not enjoin the defendants from**:

a. **relocating or reassigning USDA employees currently located within the National Capital Region to other local offices or locations also located within the National Capital Region, or closing offices, programs, or facilities in the National Capital Region from which all employees have been relocated or reassigned to other local offices or locations within the National Capital Region;**
a. **reassigning a covered employee who applies or applied to a job announcement on USAJobs or other internal agency merit-hiring application processes, is selected for the position, and accepts the position, provided that the reassignment is unrelated to the reorganization activities stayed by paragraphs 1 through** 3;

For purposes of this order, "local commuting area" means "the geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to their usual employment." 5 C.F.R. § 351.203.

For purposes of this order, **"offices" does not include physical locations that were empty of staff as of the date of the congressional notification letter** for the relevant USDA component (which are either in April or June 2026).

**This order does not require the defendants to return employees who were relocated pursuant to the reorganization activities stayed by paragraphs 1 through 3 and began work at their new duty station prior to this Court's first administrative stay order on September 14, 2026**, to their original duty station or enjoin the defendants from issuing any associated relocation incentive or payment entitlements to those employees.

Within two business days of October 13, 2026, the defendants shall provide notice of this order to all USDA employees working at Agricultural Research Service; United States Forest Service; Food and Nutrition Administration; Research, Education, and Economics mission area; Foreign Agricultural Service; Rural Development mission area; Farm Production and Conservation mission area; Office of the General Counsel; and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and any labor organization representing any of those affected USDA employees, including by email notification that includes this order, and by posting this order on the USDA Reorganization website (https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/reorganization) and any webpage of Agricultural Research Service; United States Forest Service; Food and Nutrition Administration; Research, Education, and Economics mission area; Foreign Agricultural Service; Rural Development mission area; Farm Production and Conservation mission area; Office of the General Counsel; and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, dedicated to the reorganization activities stayed by this

order.

By October 22, 2026, the defendants shall file a declaration verifying that they have complied with this order and setting forth the steps they have taken to do so.

Impacted USDA employees will be notified of any changes in the litigation.