

Southern Administrative Heads
Winter Meeting

Omni Louisville Hotel

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USDA Announces New Priorities in 2026

On December 30, 2025, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins signed a [Secretary's Memorandum](#), announcing five new priorities for USDA-funded agricultural research and development aimed at strengthening U.S. agriculture:

- **Increasing Profitability of Farmers and Ranchers**
- **Expanding Markets and Creating New Uses of U.S. Agricultural Products**
- **Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species**
- **Promoting Soil Health to Regenerate Long-Term Productivity of Land**
- **Improving Human Health through Precision Nutrition and Food Quality**

According to the [press release](#) the memo **refocuses research investments on applied outcomes that enhance farmer profitability, productivity, export competitiveness, and lower input costs, while moving away from prior policy approaches**

Congressional Update

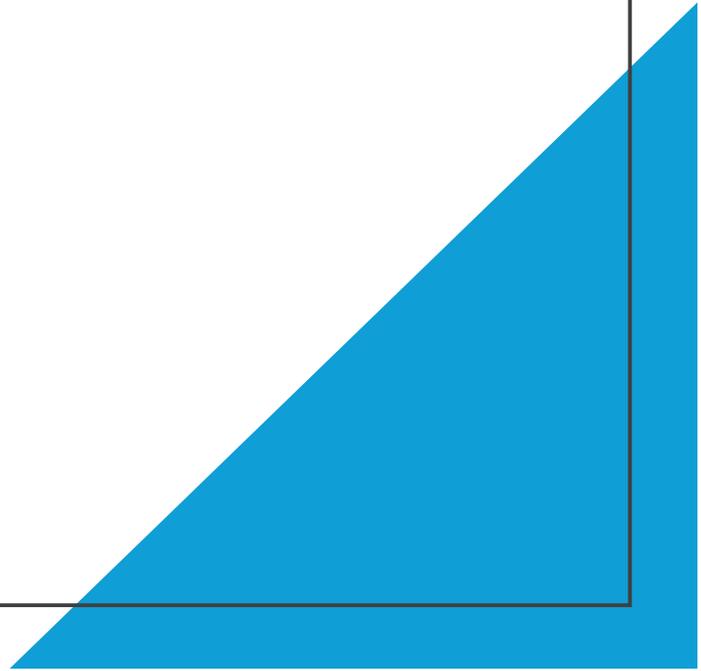
- NSF has implemented several updates to its research security policies which include mandatory research security assessments and documentation for senior personnel. Researchers must maintain detailed records of foreign contracts, grants, and program participation.
- **White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)** issued a Request for Information (RFI) on **Accelerating the American Scientific Enterprise**. OSTP seeks input from academia, industry, local governments, and other stakeholders on priorities to advance the U.S. science and technology (S&T) ecosystem.
- NIFA's Federal Assistance Policy Guide outlines administrative requirements, allowable costs, terms, conditions, and audit rules, but **does not change F&A**

Policy Board of Directors

- The LBA contract was approved for the last year of the 4-year contract, with a provision to extend for another 4-year period (with annual review). I am personally very pleased with the work and the team at LBA and look forward to their leadership and assistance as we move into FY27, Farm Bill restart (maybe?) and the development of a capacity campaign for FY28.
- The PBD approved the 2026 operating budgets for the BAA, CARET and Communications and Marketing.
- Approved the BAC recommendations for FY27 Unified Ask, which will be ready in time for the CARET Washington Conference.
- Approved a name change from the Policy Board of Directors to the BAA Board of Directors to more fully reflect how the PBD has been functioning the last few years.
- The BAA Board of Directors adopted a new meeting schedule where they will meet in person at the BAA Summer Leadership Meeting and APLU Annual meeting and have zoom meetings in April, October and Jan 2027.

Advocacy and Initiatives

- FY26 Appropriations Unified Ask
- FY27 Appropriations Unified Ask
- Capacity Phase I Executive Summary
- Capacity Phase II Update
- Research Facilities Act
- LGU Roadmap
- Adaptive Roots
- Decadal Vision



Elevate 2026: Rising Together

- Inspiring but actionable,
- Reinforces partnership and culture,
- Aligns with organizational transformation,
- Works across all sections and initiatives.

