

OneUSDA Lydia's Journey to Feed Her Family

Follow Lydia on each step of her journey to understand how agencies work together to help her provide safe and healthy meals for her family.

This service blueprint shows you how USDA affects the journey of a particular customer (Lydia) as she tries to provide safe, healthy meals for her family. You'll see actions that Lydia performs where she **directly** interacts with USDA programs and services. Beneath each action, you'll see the various agencies that offer programs and services supporting it.

The **indirect** or behind-the-scenes actions raise awareness of how large of a role USDA plays in the customer journey. Lydia may never see or even know these USDA actions are happening, but they're fundamental to her journey.



Lydia the Loving Parent

Age: 32
Occupation: Cafeteria Worker
Location: Springville, AL

A single mom who understands the importance of a healthy meal, but needs financial assistance to buy food in her rural town. She takes a lot of pride in providing for her family.

Likes

- Cooking and learning new recipes
- Making her money go further
- When school provides lunch for her kids

Dislikes

- When her food goes bad too quickly
- When food is too expensive
- Confusing food labels and instructions

Note: Lydia is a customer persona representing the perspective of one of USDA's top 10 customer types. She's a fictionalized representation of a USDA customer, and she's based on real customer data gathered in interviews and through secondary research.

Why This Was Created

To better understand the OneUSDA Ecosystem and how USDA agencies might improve customer experiences through collaboration, the Customer Experience Center of Excellence mapped how USDA directly and indirectly benefits a particular customer named Lydia. In order to create this service blueprint, the research team conducted more than 50 interviews with USDA employees and customers with unique insight into food safety and nutrition, and examined USDA websites to see how each agency presents its programs and services to customers. Conduct your own research and uncover your customers' needs with USDA's user research templates found at <https://www.usda.gov/digital-strategy/tools>.

Learn

1 Learn About Healthy Eating at Home

After a family health scare, Lydia visits the library to find tips on eating healthy and staying active.

DIRECT

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Finding dietary guidelines and nutrition education published by FNS.
- FS** Visiting the nearby National Forest for exercise and exploration.
- NIFA** Attending a training on healthy lifestyles hosted by a land grant university partnered with NIFA.

INDIRECT

Behind the scenes, USDA enables all Americans to live healthfully:

- FNS** FNS conducts research projects that answer public health questions and keep dietary guidelines up-to-date.
- ERS** ERS helps policymakers improve USDA nutrition programs to better serve customers by evaluating how these programs perform.
- NIFA** NIFA supports research to uncover new ways to improve access to nutritious foods.

2 Learn About Food Safety at Work

As a cafeteria worker, Lydia takes precautions to make sure the food she serves students is safe.

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Receiving FNS-funded training at the school cafeteria where she works to spot and manage food safety risks associated with fresh produce.
- FSIS** Contacting FSIS via call centers or online portals to answer questions about safe storage, handling, and preparation of food, and subscribing to alerts about unsafe foods.
- FNS** Encouraging kids at her school to volunteer at the school garden funded by FNS and/or RHS so they can better understand where food comes from.
- RHS**

Behind the scenes, USDA promotes Food Safety across the supply chain:

- FSIS** FSIS collects scientific information to identify, control, and prevent foodborne diseases, and conducts on-site investigations at food establishments and processing facilities.
- ERS** ERS studies how consumers react to food safety incidents, provides the costs of foodborne illnesses, and examines the role of government and private markets in making meat and poultry safe.
- NASS** NASS surveys food safety practices and ensures that policymakers and agribusinesses have up-to-date information to make decisions that impact food safety.
- NIFA** NIFA provides grants to support efforts to innovate and apply new approaches to food safety.
- RUS** RUS gives rural residents access to online food safety resources by funding utilities including telecommunication and broadband projects.
- AMS** AMS offers resources to food establishments and processing facilities to ensure that food is handled, prepared, and packaged safely. AMS also conducts voluntary supplier audits to ensure food safety measures are in place.
- APHIS** APHIS protects the health of agriculture by investigating imports and conducting scientific research to defend the U.S. against the spread of pests and diseases.
- ARS** ARS performs research on food safety, entomology, and food animal production that informs policies and regulations to keep food safe.

Shop

3 Get Affordable Groceries From Superstores

To save time and money, Lydia does the bulk of her grocery shopping at a superstore.

DIRECT

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Using nutrition benefits provided via FNS to supplement her family's food budget and improve their access to fresh, healthy foods.
- NIFA** Using the FNS retail locator tool to find SNAP-approved stores closer to home.
- AMS** Checking for AMS-provided food labels and certifications (like the USDA shields) to find information on meat and poultry quality.

INDIRECT

Behind the scenes, USDA keeps superstores stocked with affordable, safe, and reliable groceries:

- FSA** FSA provides a financial safety net to farmers to enhance food security.
- ERS** ERS examines the impact of nutrition education and the use of food labels on food choices and dietary outcomes. ERS also analyzes factors that influence food affordability.
- RMA** RMA offers market-based risk management tools to strengthen the economic stability of agriculture.
- NASS** NASS conducts surveys on agriculture items and prices to help producers and agricultural businesses plan for productive futures.
- FAS** FAS strengthens trade linkages between the U.S. and other countries and helps maintain markets for, and access to, hundreds of products.
- FSIS** FSIS re-inspects and samples shipments to make sure imported products sold in U.S. stores are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled and packaged.
- AMS** AMS audits food suppliers' practices (providing another marketing tool to promote quality products) and helps facilitate the marketing of products from farmers to consumers.
- APHIS** APHIS ensures that all imported agricultural products meet USDA's entry requirements and are free of pests and diseases.

4 Buy Fresh Produce From Farmers Markets

Lydia takes her kids to a farmers market that accepts SNAP and offers incentives to buy fresh produce.

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers markets that have been authorized by FNS to accept SNAP benefits.
- AMS** Using a directory maintained by AMS to find nearby farmers markets.
- NIFA** Leveraging cash incentive programs championed by NIFA to buy fresh fruit and vegetables directly from farmers.

Behind the scenes, USDA supports farmers and helps them sell items at local markets:

- FSA** FSA provides resources to start, maintain, and strengthen a farm or ranch.
- NRCS** NRCS provides financial and technical support to help farmers conserve their land and sustain agricultural productivity.
- AMS** AMS helps farmers to market their products directly to consumers.
- ARS** ARS develops science-based information and technologies for animal and plant production to help farmers meet demands for affordable, wholesome products.
- ERS** ERS gives policymakers insight into how local food systems and farmers markets impact food access, food choices, and community prosperity.
- NIFA** NIFA supports local food projects, like farmers markets, that create opportunities for farmers and connect consumers with healthy food.

5 Make Her Budget Go Further

Lydia visits local food banks and enrolls her kids in school breakfast and lunch programs.

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Enrolling her children in school or childcare programs that receive assistance through FNS to provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost meals, fresh fruits, milk and more.
- FNS** Helping her elderly parents enroll in programs provided by FNS to have supplemental groceries delivered.
- AMS** Visiting her food pantry to receive food donations originally purchased and delivered to AMS.

Behind the scenes, USDA strengthens America's nutrition safety net:

- AMS** AMS purchases and delivers domestically produced and processed food to schools, food banks, and households.
- NIFA** NIFA provides grants to support programs that strengthen local food systems and/or improve low-income consumers' access to food.
- RBCS** RBCS and RHS provide funds to help maintain buildings that house food banks and other community services.
- RHS**

Prepare

6 Prepare Family Meals

Lydia takes pride in preparing healthy, delicious meals for her family.

DIRECT

Lydia directly interacts with USDA by...

- FNS** Referencing FNS resources for tips and recipes to encourage healthy eating.
- FSIS** Using FSIS tools and apps to understand food storage and check that she's cooking meat at the right temperature.

INDIRECT

Behind the scenes, USDA enables Americans to cook homemade meals:

- FSA** FSA works with rural communities to prevent pollution of drinking water.
- FS** FS maintains groundwater-fed water sources that serve communities.
- RUS** RUS allows rural residents to access online nutritional resources by helping to fund telecommunications and broadband projects; assists energy providers in lowering energy costs for communities; and provides funding to communities to build systems for clean and reliable drinking water, sanitary sewage, and waste disposal.



IT MODERNIZATION
Centers of Excellence

- Farm Production and Conservation**
Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Risk Management Agency (RMA)
- Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services**
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- Food Safety**
Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
- Marketing and Regulatory Programs**
Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

- Natural Resources and Environment**
Forest Service (FS)
- Research, Education and Economics**
Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
Economic Research Service (ERS)
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

- Rural Development**
Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS)
Rural Housing Service (RHS)
Rural Utilities Service (RUS)
- Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs**
Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

- Departmental Administration**
- Executive Operations**

Note: While not included in the graphic above, Departmental Administration and Executive Operations play an integral role in enabling all agencies to serve customers.