



U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small Continues College Tour with Visit to Fort Valley State University

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The Deputy's Visit Underscores the Biden-Harris Administration's Commitment to 1890 Land-Grant Institutions

ATHENS, Ga., Apr. 4, 2024 - U.S. Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small visited Fort Valley State University (FVSU) on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, to highlight the Department's ongoing support for agricultural research and education at FVSU and met with students to discuss potential career opportunities available for the next generation of farmers, foresters, conservationists, and entrepreneurs.

This visit is [a continuation of Deputy Secretary Torres Small's College Tour](#), which began in January, to underscore how colleges and universities are working with the USDA to advance rural prosperity, climate-smart practices, competition, and sustainability. Deputy Secretary Torres Small's tour is also highlighting how USDA is making a difference on college campuses, from new funding for education and training to cutting edge research to economic development to build a food and agriculture food system. The Deputy's College Tour includes visits to Land-grant Universities, 1980s Land-grant Colleges and Universities, 1994 Institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, community colleges, and state schools.

"Thanks to historic funding secured by President Biden, USDA is creating new opportunities for the next generation of farmers, foresters, researchers, and entrepreneurs in Georgia," said Agriculture Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small. "These investments will bring economic opportunity back to rural communities, better position students to build a more resilient food system, and give them the chance to succeed in the communities they love."

FVSU is one of the 19 Historically Black Colleges and Universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The Deputy Secretary's visit included a meeting with university leadership and engagement with students from across FVSU's campus. Congressman Sanford Bishop was also in attendance during the Deputy Secretary's visit.

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) provided more than \$5 billion in support to land-grant university campuses since fiscal year 2021, offering student-centered scholarships to recruit, mentor, and train undergraduate students for jobs in food and agricultural sciences and related fields.

Among NIFA's student-centered scholarship programs for which these institutions have received funding are:

- **1890 Scholarships Program:** This program provides scholarships to support recruiting, engaging, retaining, mentoring, and training of undergraduate students at the 1890 Land-grant Universities, resulting in baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields.
- **New Beginnings for Tribal Students Program:** This program aims to increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students attending 1994, 1862, and 1890 Land-grant Universities.
- **Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Program:** This program is designated for graduate degree (master's and doctoral) programs and postgraduate training of the next generation of policymakers, researchers, and educators in the food and agricultural sciences.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is one of several agencies under the USDA umbrella that offer career opportunities to help support farmers and ranchers. FSA provides a safety net to agricultural producers through commodity price support, disaster assistance, conservation programs, and access to capital to start, expand, or enhance an operation. In Georgia, FSA has over 60 offices and 350 employees across the state.

"Our agency's programs and resources are vital to ensuring that our agricultural producers can remain on the farm," said Arthur Tripp, Jr., USDA FSA State Executive Director in Georgia. "We're pleased to have several 1890 Scholars and Pathways Interns on our team while they complete their education. It is essential that we provide our future workforce and the next generation of agricultural leaders with the opportunities and resources they need to succeed in order to keep assisting our farmers and ranchers."

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit? [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

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