

Chizoba Ezenwa (she/her)

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Professional Portfolio: chizobaezenwa.com

Active Security Clearance: Secret

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Special Assistant, Office of the Administrator (OA)

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C.

August 2022 – Present

Hours per week: 40

Supervisor: Ben Rau, +1 (202)802-0029

Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

- Collaborate with OA senior leadership in formulation, administration, and analysis of FAS policies, programs, and operations designed to meet the agency's objectives.
- Assist OA senior leadership in day-to-day operations of the Office of the Administrator, including strategic management of the Administrator and Associate Administrators' time, requiring awareness of the agency's views and philosophies on confidential policy issues.
- Present proposals to OA senior leadership and other top agency officials for new or revised policies, including evaluations of factors that have the potential to affect agency-wide programs and goals.
- Independently analyze, review, draft, and edit briefing materials produced for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Deputy Secretary, and USDA principals, ensuring clear and concise messaging on matters of agricultural trade policy, administration of agency programs, and controversial issues.
- Initiate necessary corrective actions on memos, correspondence, and directives critical to agency operations and meeting USDA's policy objectives.
- Developed and consistently manage a user-friendly, automated central tracking system of tasks, requests, and projects – resulting in timely submission of assignments and improved internal operations.
- Serve as the sole Contracting Officer Representative (COR) in OA to observe, document, and communicate contractor performance for services including managerial training and receptions.

Management Analyst (Executive Assistant)

USDA Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs (TFAA)

1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C.

January 2022 – July 2022

Hours per week: 40

Supervisor: Ben Rau, +1 (202)802-0029

Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

- Competitively selected for a detail assignment to work closely with senior leadership and political appointees – including the TFAA Acting Deputy Under Secretary, TFAA Chief of Staff, and top-level government officials in the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) and Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).
- Independently received, assessed, and scheduled meeting requests for the TFAA principal, using comprehensive knowledge of TFAA's priority objectives to effectively relay organizational interests to internal and external stakeholders – including private industry members and trade organizations.
- Performed critical analysis and revisions of briefing materials produced for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Deputy Secretary, and TFAA senior leadership for consistent messaging on agricultural trade policy.
- Prepared standard operating procedures for Management Analyst portfolio where no documented guidance existed before, creating comprehensive resources that built institutional knowledge.
- Provided keynote remarks on a Women's History Month Panel that included the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, focused on USDA's workforce. Spoke to an audience of 1,200 about "leading at my level" and provided recommendations to the Deputy Secretary on ways to increase USDA's accessibility.
- Trained a new Management Analyst on an interagency billing process run by the U.S. State Department and processed payment of a lingering \$80,000 invoice while completing detail responsibilities. This training saved the agency considerable staff resources and decreased internal vulnerability.

Management Analyst
USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C.

August 2020 – January 2022

Hours per week: 40
Supervisor: William Bomersheim, +1 (202)720-1596
Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

Management Analyst, GS-12 (August 2021 – January 2022)

- Administered and led day-to-day budgeting, reporting, and personnel functions for nine divisions, working directly with senior leadership focused on agricultural trade promotion and capacity building.
- Managed program area's five-million-dollar budget portfolio previously overseen by a Senior Analyst at the GS-14 level, ensuring all divisions had the resources necessary to meet their respective missions.
- Explained and justified detailed payroll report data in quarterly presentations to the Deputy Administrator and Managing Directors. Independently generated detailed payroll reports capturing roughly 250 employee salary hours by converting accounting data into comprehensible spreadsheets, which greatly improved the program area's ability to track payroll expenditures. Demonstrated strong problem-solving skills in resolving payroll errors, improving internal controls and fiscal management.
- Served as the primary resource and trainer to senior leadership on personnel action entry and office management in the midst of an agency-wide Human Resources transition, resulting in seamless input and evaluation of work accomplishments such as recruitment, retirement, and awards.
- Conducted quarterly reviews to certify unliquidated obligations, ensuring divisions reported balances to make funds available that otherwise would not be used. Identified obligations amounting to nearly \$1 million that needed to be closed, thereby making funds available for other uses before funding expired.

Management Analyst, GS-11 (August 2020 – August 2021)

- Supported Senior Analyst with day-to-day personnel and budget-related operations. Attended program area meetings and recorded action items for the Senior Analyst's record and reference.
- Became responsible for the program area's five-million-dollar budget portfolio, previously managed at the GS-14 level, after nine months in the role. Routinely met with senior leadership and managed agreements of up to \$600,000, allowing the program area to maintain mission-critical operations. Received awards for providing outstanding customer service and excellent operational management.
- Built working relationships with State Department Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and internal agency staff to tackle lingering unliquidated obligations between program area and FSI. Successfully analyzed and closed 50 ULOs dating back to 2017 amounting to nearly \$60,000.
- Supported agency-wide programs as a note-taker for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program, providing accurate written records of multi-disciplinary panel discussions held to reach consensus for Fiscal Year 2021 proposals to be funded.

Elected DEI Program Coordinator and Member
FAS Junior Professional Advancement Community (JPAC)
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C.

October 2020 – October 2022

Hours per week: 6
Supervisor: Allison Thomas, Managing Director
Serving as JPAC Advisor, +1 (202)690-1850
Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

- Actively supported the mission of the agency by promoting the development of junior professionals as a member of JPAC and a peer-elected Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator as of April 2021. Planned, organized, and led several initiatives supporting the FAS mission, including the following:
 - Moderated a virtual event featuring former USDA Secretary Mike Espy, with an audience of over 100 FAS staff and external participants, resulting in a productive Q&A session about Secretary Espy's career to inform our work in public service.
 - Planned a virtual conversation between 60 FAS staff and the first USDA Senior Advisor for Racial Equity to the Secretary of Agriculture. Coached a peer on how to effectively moderate the session. This guidance elevated their strengths before the agency.

- Organized the first hybrid JPAC event featuring Ambassador Allan Mustard (retired) to deliver a presentation on FAS history to an audience of nearly 200 in-person and virtual participants.
- Created a timely and informative infographic about Juneteenth approved by the FAS Office of Civil Rights following its official designation as a legal public holiday.
- Generated and launched an anonymous survey for employees to provide feedback on JPAC programming, which facilitated targeted program evaluation for the JPAC Executive Board.

Food Security Extension Agent

U.S. Peace Corps

01 B.P. 971 Corps de la Paix Americain Cotonou, Benin

September 2017 – November 2019

Hours per week: 40

Supervisor: Stanislas Gbaguidi, +229 97-97-81-46

Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

Food Security Extension Agent

- Implemented and managed two self-sustaining village savings and loans associations (VSLA) as the first food security Peace Corps volunteer in the community, resulting in improved financial literacy and increased cumulative revenues for 40 women. This project was acknowledged by the Peace Corps Country Director in a rare field visit to the community to celebrate a year of successful VSLA operations.
- Worked weekly with community leadership on VSLA administration, resulting in advancement of sustainable, skilled leadership who has since implemented seven additional VSLAs in the community.
- Independently developed and led food security trainings on gardening and food conservation to 45 local producers, allowing producers to immediately apply lessons learned in their farming operations.
- Collaborated with community health workers on malaria prevention programs and evaluations for more than 80 pregnant women and children during peak malaria seasons.
- Demonstrated strong communication skills through development and maintenance of a blog recognized as Outstanding Blog in the 2017 Peace Corps Blog It Home Contest (cezenwa1.wixsite.com/bnblog).

Program Coordinator (2018) and Co-Director (2019), Camp Success

- Independently conducted research and collaborated with a team in the writing of a 2018 youth development grant successfully awarded to fund a week-long girls' empowerment program, providing 48 high-achieving middle school girls with the opportunity to develop essential life skills.
- Coordinated a two-day training program conducted in French for 16 Beninese and Peace Corps camp counselors. Ensured all camp logistics and presentations were finalized prior to official camp program.
- Collaborated with local NGO entities, government personnel, and community leaders to establish partnerships and coalitions, resulting in a nearly 50% community contribution to the 2019 budget.
- Conducted analysis of the 2018 camp outcomes to strategically improve 2019 objectives and processes, resulting in a more efficient camp budget and an organized database of the camp's 10-year history.

Volunteer Resource (2018)

- Worked directly with Peace Corps senior leadership to develop and facilitate 144 hours of technical and cross-cultural training for 40 new trainees, ensuring future volunteers were advised on potential challenges of service and food security project techniques.
- Composed and presented weekly reports to Peace Corps senior leadership, outlining proposed recommendations, strengths of the training program, and trainee evaluations.

President (2018-2019), Peer Support Network

- Led a Peer Support Network Committee comprised of twelve peers in organizing initiatives to support more than 100 Peace Corps Benin volunteers with service-related issues through self-care programs.
- Served as the liaison between Peace Corps senior leadership and volunteers on matters of physical and mental health, improving how in-country and U.S.-based resources were delivered.
- Outlined reports to senior leadership on outcomes of self-care programming. Facilitated a seamless transition and training of the new committee in 2019.

Program Assistant
Sahel Research Group (SRG)
University of Florida
341 Buckman Drive, Gainesville, FL

August 2016 – August 2017
Hours per week: 20
Supervisor: Dr. Leonardo Villalón, +1 (352)273-1536
Okay to contact supervisor: Yes

- Independently prepared and distributed weekly e-newsletters to more than 200 subscribers about contemporary news in the West African Sahel Region, requiring thorough consultation and translation of French and English news sources and ensuring that the SRG was seen as a credible resource in the field.
- Assisted the SRG Coordinator, Dr. Villalón, in implementing the group's first conference in February 2017 by contacting attending authors, coordinating travel and board, and procuring event items – resulting in a successful conference well attended by more than 50 international subject-matter experts.
- Communicated and worked with university IT staff on a modernization initiative, creating a faster SRG website that met university standards and included user-friendly features.
- Provided logistical and administrative support to the office and composed guidance on duties, operations, and suggestions for successive assistants, ensuring sustainable office operations.

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

International Career Advancement Program (ICAP) Fellow, 2022

October 2022

Aspen, Colorado and Washington, DC

ICAP is a professional development and leadership program for highly promising mid-career professionals in U.S. international affairs, sponsored by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies and by the Aspen Institute.

Agriculture-100 (AG-100) and Agriculture-200 (AG-200) Certifications

January – November 2021

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington, D.C.

Conducted case studies and deepened understanding of economic and commodity analysis in relation to agricultural trade issues as well as principles of trade policy and market development critical to the FAS mission.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate

May 2021

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Learned essential practices designed to increase employee diversity and create an inclusive business model.

Contracting Officer's Representative Level 1 Certification

January 2021

Federal Acquisition Institute

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in International Studies

May 2017

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

GPA: 3.78, Cum Laude

Specialization: Africa | Minor: International Development and Humanitarian Assistance

Study Abroad Program: UF in the Dominican Republic, *June 2014*

Awards: International Scholar Medallion, Peace Corps Prep Certificate, Dean's List

Professional Portfolio: *chizobaezenwa.com*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: French (Advanced), Spanish (Beginning), Igbo (Beginning)

Project Management: Economic and Budget Analysis, Survey Design, Intercultural Facilitation, Training and Curriculum Development, Event Planning

Computer Literacy: Microsoft Suite, Website Design, and Social Media Engagement