

Blake E. Bergen

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) | *Washington, DC* *June 2018 – Present*
Contract Specialist | *Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)* | GS-11 Step 1 *March 2020 – Present*
Agricultural Marketing Specialist | *AMS* | GS-9 Step 4 *June 2018 – Feb 2020*

- ❖ Promoted from Agricultural Marketing Specialist in March 2020 with same portfolio
- ❖ As lead specialist for agency's most robust commodity portfolio, administers procurement activities of over \$230 million annually in domestic produce for distribution and use in nutrition programs for children, the elderly, and needy families
- ❖ Prepares announcements, invitations for bid (IFB), requests for proposals (RFP), memos, reports, contracts, letters of protest, SBA Certificate of Competency referrals, and other contractual documents in the administration of multi-million-dollar contracts
- ❖ Created over \$646 million in contracts and \$204 million in allocation purchase orders
- ❖ Managed, edited, and designed documents; led meetings; assisted in the decision-making process; crafted final proposal to the Secretary, Under Secretary, and Administrator; and designed and oversaw tracking system for the USDA's \$2.59 billion trade mitigation program
- ❖ Launched the agency's first procurements of fresh grapes, worth nearly \$37 million to date
- ❖ Upgraded and standardized tracking documents for commodities worth over \$178.5 million, and created tracking spreadsheets for contract administration tasks
- ❖ Manages and updates multiple purchase schedules for \$4 billion in commodities
- ❖ Drafted a purchasing plan for \$105 million of fruit and nuts under the USDA Section 32 program
- ❖ Subject Matter Expert for indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts and SAP system
- ❖ Serves as Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR) and ensures programmatic adherence to Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)
- ❖ Recruited to be the AMS LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program Manager to advocate for the gender and sexually diverse community on behalf of the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity
- ❖ Conducts the analysis and resolution of waivers of requirements, destination changes, shipment and delivery issues, invoicing disputes, etc.
- ❖ Performs detailed analysis of bids to ensure the most advantageous awards for USDA programs and best use of taxpayer funds
- ❖ Delivers exceptional, swift, and proactive customer service to contractors, industry organizations, government partners, and other parties via phone and e-mail
- ❖ Develops and maintains effective working relationships with agricultural industry representatives, trade associations, and other USDA program areas and agencies to achieve cooperation on policy and program decisions
- ❖ Runs weekly meeting with senior staff and colleagues from Commodity Procurement Program and Specialty Crops Division
- ❖ Authored articles for internal and external newsletters to showcase agency accomplishments
- ❖ Successfully recruited three staff members to AMS
- ❖ Trained new and existing staff on complex contracting procedures
- ❖ Drafted standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and continuation of knowledge
- ❖ Represents USDA and AMS at industry and recruitment events across the country
- ❖ Organized team-building events and trainings for Commodity Procurement Program staff
- ❖ Manages, oversees, evaluates, and coordinates public/private sector activities and market development and promotion activities
- ❖ Facilitates the compilation, review, and analysis of economic information and data regarding production, trade, consumption, prices, etc.

- ❖ Researches government policies and agricultural and economic conditions effecting marketing interests
- ❖ Develops product strategy plans that include coordinating stakeholder input, organizing meetings, finding balance between industry and recipient needs, and formulating procurement strategies
- ❖ Assists with the formulation of policies for the administration of USDA programs
- ❖ Prepares oral and written briefings, memos, correspondence, and pertinent background information for USDA decision makers on a variety of subjects
- ❖ Prepared documents for audit in a timely, organized, and detailed manner
- ❖ Engaged in agency rapid response efforts during the COVID-19 emergency, including gathering market information for disaster relief purchases, proactively and empathetically communicating with private industry, processing contract modifications, resolving delivery issues, and working closely with government partners
- ❖ Created and maintains an anti-racism resource library and organized events to promote racial equality within the workplace

Blake Bergen Photography | *Washington, DC*
 Founder and Freelance Photographer

June 2008 – Present

- ❖ Launched start-up business to share cultural and travel experiences, and provide marketing services to corporations and local brands
- ❖ Captures quality portrait, event, travel, and food photographs
- ❖ Creates and edits compelling photography and videography content to promote business and marketing services on various social media platforms
- ❖ Designed, developed, and actively maintains a website, www.blakebergen.com, and three blogs
- ❖ Wrote and published hundreds of blog posts documenting diverse cultures, food, and people
- ❖ Collaborated with the Washington Blade as an event photographer, covering a wide variety of events for the LGBTQ community for multiple print and online features
- ❖ Partnered with Unilever, Target, Peace Corps, and the George Washington University for in-print and online campaigns

FHI 360 | *Washington, DC*
 Program Associate | *International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)*

Aug 2017 – June 2018

- ❖ Collaborated with Program Officers and U.S. Department of State (DOS) staff to design and implement 15 three-week professional exchange projects for over 130 mid-career professionals
- ❖ Made logistical arrangements for groups of international visitors to the U.S., including travel (via E2 Solutions), accommodation, ground transportation, catering, and coordination with local sponsors
- ❖ Monitored program activities to ensure successful completion, and provided timely solutions and expert customer service to liaisons and interpreters in the field, FHI 360 staff, and U.S. government partners
- ❖ Processed and tracked project expenditures, produced financial documents, and assisted in the monitoring of project budgets totaling approximately \$850,000 in accordance with company and federal government guidelines; achieved 24% cost savings with team
- ❖ Reconciled costs with multi-million dollar budget projections for 60 DOS grant-funded projects
- ❖ Produced and edited project materials and maintained database for active and completed projects
- ❖ Subject matter expert for accessing and operating DOS-based system, ORDIV
- ❖ Briefed interpreters and participants on administrative procedures and logistical arrangements
- ❖ Independently researched, compiled, verified, and tracked data and program information
- ❖ Co-lead for hiring and technical training of six new employees and interns
- ❖ As social media team lead, crafted posts, designed graphics, arranged schedule, and supervised staff to produce engaging content for office social media accounts with 4,500+ followers
- ❖ Acted as informal Chinese (Mandarin) translator for meetings and documents

Bergen CV

- ❖ Projects included: Promoting Pedestrian-Friendly Cities (Georgia); Natural Gas Sector Development (Iraq); Federal, State, and Local Government (Burma); Education, Entrepreneurship, and Community Development: Engaging the African Diaspora and Indigenous Communities Across the Americas (Western Hemisphere); Promoting Social Change through the Arts (Multi-Regional); Green Energy in the U.S. (China); Disability Access and Inclusion (Japan); Accountability in Government (Multi-Regional); Investigative Journalism (Western Hemisphere); Natural Resource Management (Burma); Tourism and Economic Development (Saudi Arabia); Public Health and Infectious Diseases (Angola); Parks and Protected Area Management (Multi-Regional); School Management in Madrasahs (Malaysia); and Combating Domestic Violence (China)

Peace Corps China | *Luzhou, Sichuan, China*

June 2015 – July 2017

University Educator and Cross-Cultural Facilitator | *Southwest Medical University*

- ❖ Instructed 400+ students, faculty, and medical professionals in oral English and Western culture for four semesters at an internationally accredited medical university as a government certified Foreign Expert
- ❖ Developed a variety of lesson plans and presentations using creative and participatory language learning methods for a wide range of audiences, from middle school students to experienced doctors
- ❖ Organized and managed weekly office hours, weekly informal events, and monthly topic-based lectures on American culture to enhance students' mastery of the English language, introduce new ways of thinking and communicating, and promote a deeper understanding of the U.S.
- ❖ Reviewed and edited a dozen internal and external documents, speeches, and invitations for Southwest Medical University's President, Foreign Affairs Office, and International Language Department
- ❖ Functioned as subject matter expert on participatory teaching techniques and American culture during a two-week summer seminar with approximately 300 local educators in attendance
- ❖ Trained more than 60 international interns over two days on Teaching English as a Foreign Language in China on behalf of the Education Department of Sichuan Province's international exchange association
- ❖ Trained Peace Corps counterpart teachers on intercultural communication in a day-long workshop
- ❖ Elected as the provincial representative to provide input, counsel, and recommendations to staff and constituents on matters related to programming, training, and support for Volunteers
- ❖ Designed and facilitated nine trainings for Volunteers on areas ranging from peer support and LGBTQ awareness to job hunting and professionalism online
- ❖ Served as Co-Chair for PeaceOut, a support group for LGBTQ Volunteers, and in so doing crafted materials and delivered trainings on topics of gender and sexual diversity sensitivity
- ❖ Published photography project, "One in 1.38 Billion," with curated images showcasing moments of solitude in an otherwise bustling and crowded China

Peace Corps | *Washington, DC*

Aug 2014 – June 2015

Special Assistant | *Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Operations* | FP-5 Step 1

- ❖ Liaison to 25 domestic and 20 global offices; providing accurate and timely advice on procedures, reports, requirements, and other matters necessary to develop innovative solutions to complex problems
- ❖ Managed and prioritized inter-office communication, special projects, meetings, briefings, and scheduling for the Regional Director of the Office of Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Operations
- ❖ Coordinated with senior staff and eight country desk officers to develop and maintain relationships with stakeholders across the U.S. government, private industry, academic institutions, and foreign entities to communicate and disseminate information about program missions and activities

- ❖ Drafted, edited, reviewed, and analyzed a range of key materials, such as outward-facing Volunteer job postings, press releases, briefing papers, talking points, and memos, including congressional notifications and requests for additional resources in excess of one million dollars
- ❖ Coordinated service procurement for overseas staff visiting the United States and for senior staff traveling abroad
- ❖ As Purchase Card and Travel Card holder was trusted to process nearly \$20,000 in transactions
- ❖ Prepared the Regional Director for international travel by coordinating itinerary (via E2 Solutions), crafting detailed travel authorizations, organizing briefing documents, and processing reimbursements
- ❖ Facilitated the analysis and resolution of requirement waivers, transportation issues, and other administrative duties
- ❖ Handled routine and sensitive calls and welcomed visitors, including high-level representatives of international, state, and local governments and major businesses
- ❖ Screened and prioritized appointments and meetings, exercising control over senior staff calendars
- ❖ Supported senior leadership in highly sensitive matters by gathering and providing information, coordinating with various offices, organizations, and individuals

Peace Corps | *Washington, DC*

May 2013 – Aug 2014

Program Support Assistant | *Staging and Staff Development Unit* | FP-6 Step 1

May 2014 – Aug 2014

Administrative Assistant | *Staging and Staff Development Unit* | FP-7 Step 2

May 2013 – May 2014

- ❖ Promoted to Program Support Assistant in May 2014 with same portfolio
- ❖ As project manager for onboarding of Volunteers, led initiative to streamline and standardize task completion procedures, reducing process time by 87.5% and support inquiries by 90%
- ❖ Led the value stream analysis for the Peace Corps pre-departure checklist, consolidating several separate offices' processes into one easy-to-use document for over 4,000 Volunteers each year
- ❖ Managed, monitored, and overhauled systems tied to the Database of Volunteer Experience
- ❖ Crafted and sent mass correspondence and materials for 75+ groups of Volunteers per year
- ❖ Communicated with incoming Volunteers to obtain and verify information, and served as first point of contact for simple and complex email and phone inquiries from a variety of stakeholders
- ❖ Supported the successful planning and execution of nearly 100 orientations and staff trainings
- ❖ Provided in-depth technical, logistical, and procedural support to staff across the organization; and maintained complete administrative records for federal reporting purposes
- ❖ Change management co-lead for 180-person department-wide training in Norman, Oklahoma
- ❖ Selected to serve as customer service expert on the historic working group to redesign the Volunteer application and back-end business processes on behalf of the Director
- ❖ Organized events, distinguished guest presentations, panel discussions, and training

United States Department of State | *Washington, DC*

Sept – Dec 2012

Public Diplomacy Intern | *Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs*

- ❖ Crafted an information memo for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, on the state of interfaith dialogue and religious freedom in 30 regional posts
- ❖ Drafted an information memo on the importance of LGBTQ inclusion in regional programming
- ❖ Welcomed and escorted a dozen groups of International Visitor Leadership Program participants from East Asia and the Pacific – ranging in status from students to members of parliament
- ❖ Summarized thousands of cables into bi-monthly, office-wide reports and newsletters
- ❖ Scheduled consultations for international visitors with key department personnel

- ❖ Assisted in the development and implementation of an evaluation process for orientation curriculum
- ❖ Supported the planning and implementation of New Recruiter Training
- ❖ Facilitated implementation of the Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Staff Development plan
- ❖ Provided administrative support in the creation of the Art of Recruitment training modules

EDUCATION

The George Washington University | *Washington, DC*
May 2013
Elliott School of International Affairs

- ❖ Bachelor of Arts, International Affairs
- ❖ Concentration in Asia and International Politics
- ❖ Minor in Political Science
- ❖ Highlighted Coursework:
 - Politics and Foreign Policy of China
 - China's Transformation
 - Chinese Culture through Film
 - Japanese Culture through Film
 - History of Modern Japan
 - Japanese I – IV
 - Reflections on the Federal Reserve (taught by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke)
 - Religion in International Affairs
 - Intro to World Religions: East
 - U.S. Foreign Policy
 - Modern Iran
 - Sociocultural Anthropology
 - Cultures of Africa

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Leadership Activities and Memberships

- ❖ LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program Manager, *Agricultural Marketing Service Office of Civil Rights and Diversity*, 2020
- ❖ Communications Team Member, *Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, D.C.*, 2020
- ❖ Member, *glifaa: LGBT+ in Foreign Affairs Agencies*, 2020
- ❖ Member, *LGBTQ Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Association*, 2020
- ❖ Social Media Team Lead, *FHI 360 International Visitor Leadership Program*, 2018
- ❖ Sichuan Representative, *Peace Corps China Volunteer Advisory Committee*, 2015 – 2017
- ❖ Warden (Safety and Security Representative) for Sichuan, *Peace Corps China*, 2015 – 2017
- ❖ Co-Chair, *PeaceOut: Peace Corps China LGBTQ Support Group*, 2016 – 2017
- ❖ Communications Director, *Spectrum: Peace Corps LGBTQ Resource Group*, 2014 – 2015
- ❖ Communications Liaison, *Peace Corps Office of Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia*, 2014 – 2015
- ❖ English for Academic Purposes Writing Tutor, *GWU Language Center*, 2014
- ❖ Associate Communications Chair, *glifaa: LGBT+ in Foreign Affairs Agencies*, 2013 – 2014
- ❖ Secretary/Treasurer, *Spectrum: Peace Corps LGBTQ and Ally Resource Group*, 2013 – 2014
- ❖ Primary School Educator, *Heads Up: An AmeriCorps Program*, 2010

Awards and Recognition

- ❖ Secretary's Honor Award, *Presented by the Secretary of U.S. Department of Agriculture*, 2019
- ❖ Award of Commendation, *Presented by U.S. Department of Agriculture*, 2019
- ❖ Award of Commendation, *Presented by U.S. Department of Agriculture*, 2018
- ❖ Certificate of Appreciation, *Presented by Peace Corps China*, 2017

- ❖ Award of Commendation, *Presented by Peace Corps*, 2014
- ❖ Best Use of Photography and Images, *Presented by Combined Federal Campaign*, 2014
- ❖ Outstanding LGBT Student of the Year Award, *Presented by the Multicultural Student Services Center of The George Washington University*, 2013
- ❖ Second Place, *Presented by Gallery 102 at Annual Awards Show*, 2013
- ❖ President's Volunteer Service Award (Silver), *Presented by Heads Up, on behalf of The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation*, 2010
- ❖ Most Spirited Teacher Award, *Presented by Heads Up*, 2010

Certifications

- ❖ Chinese for HSK 3, *Peking University*, 2020
- ❖ Chinese for HSK 2, *Peking University*, 2020
- ❖ Chinese for HSK 1, *Peking University*, 2020
- ❖ USDA Records Management Fundamentals, *USDA*, 2019
- ❖ Acquisition of Commercial Items, *Management Concepts*, 2019
- ❖ Terminating Contracts, *Management Concepts*, 2019
- ❖ Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR), *Defense Acquisition University*, 2018
- ❖ Introduction to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), *Defense Acquisition University*, 2018
- ❖ Sealed Bidding, *Defense Acquisition University*, 2018
- ❖ HUBZone Contracting, *Federal Acquisition Institute*, 2018
- ❖ Buy American Statute, *Federal Acquisition Institute*, 2018
- ❖ Viral Marketing: Crafting Shareable Content, *Lynda.com*, 2014

Summary of Special Skills

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| ❖ Customer Service | ❖ Government Contracts | ❖ Microsoft and Google Suites |
| ❖ Writing and Editing | ❖ Intercultural Communication | ❖ Professional Web Presence |
| ❖ Innovative Problem Solving | ❖ Diversity and Inclusion | ❖ Professional Photography |

Foreign Languages

- ❖ Chinese (Mandarin): *Intermediate*
- ❖ Japanese: *Pre-Intermediate*
- ❖ Spanish: *Novice*

International Experience

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| ❖ China | ❖ Malaysia | ❖ India |
| ❖ Taiwan | ❖ Singapore | ❖ Nepal |
| ❖ Hong Kong | ❖ Brunei | ❖ Israel and Palestine |
| ❖ Macau/Macao | ❖ Cambodia | ❖ Jordan |
| ❖ Japan | ❖ Laos | ❖ Egypt |
| ❖ South Korea | ❖ Myanmar/Burma | ❖ Morocco |
| ❖ Mongolia | ❖ Philippines | ❖ Russia |
| ❖ Vietnam | ❖ Indonesia | ❖ Western Europe |
| ❖ Thailand | ❖ Timor-Leste/East Timor | ❖ Latin America |

Detailed Profile: www.linkedin.com/in/blakebergen