**TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire**

1. Please provide your name and employer:

Kayla Knilans, United States Department of Agriculture

1. What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?

Scientific Policy Advisor, 2 years, 4 if you count my AAAS Fellowship in the same office in a similar role

1. Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?

University of North Carolina, Pharmacology

1. Did you do a postdoc?

Yes, at the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease

1. What are your main daily responsibilities?
2. Run the day-to-day operations for all international activities in my office and 2) Inform policy development. 1) Includes meeting planning, developing briefs and talking points, responding to requests from other government agencies or other international governments. 2) Includes leading teams, writing policy, and providing recommendations and perspectives on policy approaches to leadership.
3. What are the keys to success in your career field?

Strong communication skills (especially written), adaptability, be comfortable as a generalist, negotiation skills

1. What were the most important factors in choosing your career path and current employer?

Positive working environment, better work-life balance, the ability to have impact

1. What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?

AAAS S&T Policy Fellowship. I would not have qualified for my position without it, I also would not have known about the office.

1. What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?

A AAAS S&T Policy Fellowship or Presidential Management Fellowship are not requirements for entry, but they help enormously with career advancement

Get someone within government to help you with your USAJobs applications. They are an art form; I have seen many candidates that are qualified not make it past the first round of review.

1. How is the work/life balance in your career field and how much of a factor was that in your career choice?

It’s very good. I work remotely, 40 hours a week. I have an alternative work schedule where I work 9 hour days and have every other Friday off. This was important when I started, and has become more important over time.