

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-2907

For: FAS and FSA Employees

2014 President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA) and Call to Service Award

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Secretary of Agriculture has invited USDA employees to submit nominations for the President's Volunteer Service Awards and the Call to Service Award. The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation created the PVSA program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service. Recognizing and honoring volunteers:

- sets a standard for service to others
- encourages a sustained commitment to civic participation
- inspires others to make volunteering a central part of their lives.

The PVSA recognizes those individuals who have achieved a certain standard measured by the number of hours served over a 12-month period or cumulative hours served over the course of a lifetime. USDA will highlight extraordinary volunteers by honoring their efforts at a special presentation during the annual Secretary's Honor Awards ceremony.

B Purpose

This notice informs employees of the opportunity to submit nominations for the PVSA and the Call to Service Award. All applications shall be submitted to **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **noon Friday, April 4, 2014**.

Disposal Date	Distribution
July 1, 2014	All FAS and FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Award Information

A Eligibility

All USDA employees are eligible for an award based upon their hours of volunteer service to a qualifying organization. **For employees to be recognized through the USDA PVSA program, the 12-month period must be consecutive, must have begun on or after July 1, 2012, and must end by March 31, 2014.** Volunteer hours already recognized in a previous Presidential Volunteer Service Award are not eligible to be counted toward another award.

USDA employees who volunteer together for a single organization may be recognized as a group, with the caveat that hours credited under a group award may not also be used for an individual award.

For specific guidance on the types of volunteer activities eligible for recognition, see 2014 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility (**Exhibit 1**).

B Criteria and/or Award Levels

The Council has established a specific number of hours an individual or group must serve with a qualifying organization, and makes the distinction of “Young Adult” for anyone 25 years of age or younger.

For bronze PVSA, the employee(s) must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- Young Adults, 100 to 174 hours
- Adults, 100 to 249 hours
- Groups, 200 to 499 hours.

For silver PVSA, the employee(s) must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- Young Adults, 175 to 249 hours
- Adults, 250 to 499 hours
- Groups, 500 to 999 hours.

For gold PVSA, the employee(s) must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- Young Adults, 250 hours or more
- Adults, 500 hours or more
- Groups, 1000 hours or more.

For a President’s Call to Service Award, the employee(s) must have served 4,000 hours or more of service with a qualifying organization over the employee’s lifetime.

2 Award Information (Continued)

C Certification

All applicants will be required to have someone in a leadership capacity at the respective volunteer organization(s) to certify on the PVSA and Call to Service Award application (**Exhibit 2**) that the the number of hours for which they are claiming credit were served.

D Recognition

Each award recipient will receive an official PVSA pin, a personalized certificate of achievement, and a congratulatory letter from the President of the United States. The top five individual awardees, based upon their number of hours of service, in both the Call to Service and gold PVSA categories, will be recognized at the Secretary's Honor Awards Ceremony. One person in each of the bronze and silver award categories will be randomly selected to receive their award at the Secretary's Honor Awards Ceremony, in recognition of their efforts and as a representative of their colleagues in that award category.

3 Nomination Submissions and Contact Information

A Submitting Nominations

Each nomination will consist of the application form (**Exhibit 2**) that **must be typed, signed, scanned**, and submitted to **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, by **noon Friday, April 4, 2014**. Group applications require a separate, certified application form for each group member. Late application submissions will **not** be accepted. If needed, additional attachments that are typed will be accepted.

Notes: The service activity shall be listed in chronological order. Therefore, the ending date of the applicant's last service activity will be recorded as the applicant "Award Period Ending Date." The "Award Period Ending Date" will be displayed on the recognition certificate.

The nomination form (application) can be accessed from the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website at **<http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>**. Click "**Find Current Forms Using Our Form Number Search**" and Enter "**Notice PM-2907 Exhibit 2**" in the "**Form Number**" box.

FAS or FSA employees shall submit applications by e-mail to **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov** by noon Friday, April 4, 2014.

B Contact Information

For questions or additional information, contact Kedra Watts by either of the following:

- e-mail at **kedra.watts@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0678.

2014 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility

A General Criteria for Eligible Service

Following is the general criteria and eligible service for the 2014 USDA PVSA.

General Criteria for Eligible Service		
Criterion	Yes	No
Is the volunteer work with an organization that is <i>legally established</i> in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or one of the territories?	Eligible	Not Eligible
Does the volunteer work meet National or community needs such as youth achievement, parks and open space, health communities, conservation, animal welfare, public safety, or emergency response?	Eligible	Not Eligible
Is the work paid or otherwise compensated (e.g., stipend)? Note: Qualifying for an IRS charitable contribution deduction associated with the volunteer work, such as may be appropriate when hosting an exchange student, for example, is not in and of itself considered a stipend.	Not Eligible	Eligible
Is the work court-ordered or disciplinary-related community service?	Not Eligible	Eligible
Are the activities associated with influencing legislation or elections to a public office, engaging in protests, engaging in union activities, or likely to include political advocacy?	Not Eligible	Eligible

2014 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility (Continued)

B Examples of Eligible Service

Following are examples of eligible service.

Examples of Eligible Service (Each assumes the General Criteria are met.)		
Category	Eligible	Not Eligible
AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Military On-Duty Hours	All on-duty hours are eligible for the Call to Service award (per the PVSA organization).	Not for Bronze, Silver, or Gold.
AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Military Off-Duty Hours	All volunteer activities are eligible for all levels of PVSA.	
Faith-Based	Facilitating a weekday support group for single parents; volunteering at a Vacation Bible School; painting and cleaning a church, mosque, or synagogue.	Activities that take place during the normal worship service such as ushering or participating in the choir.
Foster Parenting	All hours which are part of the official Senior Corps Foster Grandparents program.	Non-Senior Corps foster parenting.
Care-giving	Unpaid volunteering through a legally established volunteer organization, such as the Senior Corp Senior Companions.	If not through a legally established volunteer organization (e.g., within a family or personal relationship).
Fund-raising Cancer Walk	Time spent soliciting funds and actually walking.	Rallies, meal times, etc.
Fund-raising Dinner	Organizing, setting up, and cleaning up.	Attending the dinner.
Elected position, such as with a home owners' or parent-teacher association	Planning, attending and/or presiding over meetings and events, conducting inspections, etc.	Time spent campaigning for the position, and any activity undertaken to specifically benefit the individual, as a homeowner, parent, etc.
Hosting an Exchange Student	Time spent interacting directly with the student.	Hours the student is at school, attending activities without the host parents, sleeping, etc.
Sorority/Fraternity	Mentoring activities that support such things as the member's academic advancement, community building, and leadership skills; participating in the organization's community support activities; working for the respective organization's charitable foundation.	Activities that primarily benefit the organization's social activities or the immediate house's concerns.

President's Volunteer Service and Call to Service Award Application Form

The nomination form can be accessed from the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website at <http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>. Click "Find Current Forms Using Our Form Number Search" and ENTER "Notice PM-2907, Exhibit 2" in the "Form Number" box.



President's Volunteer Service Award Application Form

Employee Name:

(exactly as it should appear on the certificate)

Agency:

(e.g., ARS, AMS, FSA)

Duty Station:

Office Telephone Number:

Volunteer Record:

Please identify the qualifying organization, activity performed, dates (mm/dd/yy – mm/dd/yy), and number of hours. Please attach additional sheets, as necessary.

Qualifying Organization and Activity (e.g., Girl Scout Council of The Nation's Capital, Scout Leader)	Dates (in chronological order)	Hours	Title of Verifying Official*	Signature of Verifying Official
Total Hours:				

Certification:

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is accurate, that the hours listed have not been credited toward a previous PVSA and, based upon my service record, I am eligible for the following award:

- ☐ **Call to Service Award** (4,000 hours or more of volunteer service over a lifetime.)
- ☐ **Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award** (500 hours or more of service to qualifying organization over the consecutive 12-month period.)
- ☐ **Silver Presidential Volunteer Service Award** (A minimum of 250 hours and a maximum of 499 hours of service to a qualifying organization over the consecutive 12-month period.)
- ☐ **Bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award** (A minimum of 100 hours and a maximum of 249 hours of service to a qualifying organization over the consecutive 12-month period.)
- ☐ I am 25 years of age or younger.

Applicant's Signature

Date

* The Verifying Official must be in a leadership position in the respective volunteer organization.