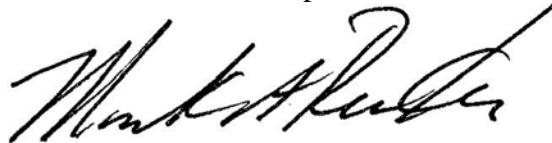


For: RMA and FSA Employees

2015 President’s Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) and Call to Service Award

Approved by: Acting Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Secretary of Agriculture has invited USDA employees to submit nominations for the PVSA and Call to Service Award. The President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation (the Council) 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, and
- inspires others to make volunteering a central part of their lives.

PVSA recognizes 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 PVSA and the Call to Service Award. All applications must be submitted no later than **noon, Friday, April 3, 2015.**

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2015	All RMA and FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Award Information

A Eligibility

All USDA employees are eligible for an award based on 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, 2013, and must end by March 31, 2015.** Volunteer hours already recognized in a previous PVSA 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 2015 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 the:

- **bronze PVSA**, employees **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
- **silver PVSA**, employees **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
- **gold PVSA**, employees **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
- **Call to Service Award**, employees **must** have served 4,000 hours or more of service with a qualifying organization over the employee’s lifetime.

Notice PM-2933

2 Award Information (Continued)

C Certification

All applicants will be required to have someone in a leadership capacity at the respective volunteer organization or organizations 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. In recognition of their efforts, and to represent their colleagues on their respective award categories, the following individuals will be invited to accept their certificates at the Secretary's Honor Awards Ceremony:

- **Call to Service Award**, the top five awardees with the highest number of hours served,
- **gold** PVSA, the two awardees with the highest number of hours served,
- **silver** PVSA, the awardee with the highest number of hours served, and
- **bronze** PVSA, the awardee with the highest number of hours served.

3 Nomination Submissions and Contact Information

A Submitting Nominations

Each nomination will consist of the application form (Exhibit 2) that **must be typed, signed, and scanned**. 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 Certificate of Achievement.

The application form (Exhibit 2) 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-XXXX**" in the "**Form Number**" box.

B Submitting RMA Nominations

RMA employees shall submit all nominations to Francine Smith by e-mail to francine.smith@rma.usda.gov by noon, Friday, April 3, 2015. All RMA nominations submitted by noon, April 3 shall be compiled into one RMA submission to the Human Resources Division PVSA mailbox at FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov, by noon Monday, April 6, 2015.

Notice PM-2933

3 Nomination Submissions and Contact Information (Continued)

C Submitting FSA Nominations

FSA employees shall submit all nominations to **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, by noon, Friday, April 3, 2015.

D Contact Information

For questions or additional information regarding this notice contact Kedra Watts by either of the following:

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

2015 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility

A General Criteria for Eligible Service

Following is the general criteria and eligible service for the 2015 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 1 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 (for example, a 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

2015 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 (according to the PVSA organization).	Bronze, silver, or gold PVSA.
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 that 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, for example, 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 owner's 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 application 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-2933" 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 <small>(e.g., Girl Scout Council of The Nation's Capital, Scout Leader)</small>	Dates <small>(in chronological order)</small>	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.