

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

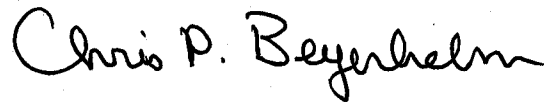
Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

**Notice PM-2941**

**For:** FSA and RMA Employees

**Training and Development for  
Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) Supervisors**

**Approved by:** Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



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**1 Overview**

**A Background**

Departmental Regulation (DR) 4040-412-002, Training and Development for Supervisors describes how the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will meet supervisory training requirements. Both FSA and RMA support the training and development of supervisors. FSA General Schedule (GS), County (CO), and RMA employees have joined USDA in its commitment to:

- ensuring that supervisory training is consistent throughout USDA,
- minimizing duplication of supervisory training efforts across USDA,
- ensuring cost effective delivery of training through blended learning approaches and economies of shared training resources among all USDA agencies and staff offices,
- building a supervisor workforce that supports long-term organizational performance,
- reducing and eliminating problems created by untrained supervisors, and
- building a positive and productive work environment with employees.

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

## Notice PM-2941

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### B Purpose

This notice:

- introduces new supervisory training requirements,
- addresses experienced supervisory training, and
- provides timelines and responsibilities.

**Note:** The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is **excluded** from this notice. Contact FAS for information about implementing DR 4040-412-002.

#### C Contact

For questions regarding this notice contact the Human Resources Division (HRD), Leadership and Employee Development Branch (LEDB), at **leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov**.

#### D Authorities and References

Authorities for training and development are as follows.

- Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR) Part 315, Subpart I, Probation on Initial Appointment to a Supervisory or Managerial Position,
- 5 CFR Part 410, Training,
- 5 CFR Part 412, Executive, Management, and Supervisory Development,
- 6-PM, Employee Development and Training,
- 27-PM, County Office Classification, Employment, and Pay Administration,
- DR 4040-412-001, Leadership Competency Framework,
- DR 4040-412-002, Training and Development for Supervisors,
- DR 4040-430, Performance Management, Section 9.a(7) and 9.c, and
- Government Employees Training Act, Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 41 and related guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management.

## Notice PM-2941

### 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training

#### A Definitions

The following definitions are applicable for this notice.

- Supervisor means permanent, full-time, employees who are responsible for delivering at least one employee's performance review.

**Note:** For the purposes of this notice, only employees who are coded as two and four in the USDA Enterprise Human Resources data system are subject to this notice's training requirement.

- New supervisor means employees who meet the definition of "supervisor" with less than one year of experience as a supervisor in the federal government.
- Experienced supervisor means employees who meet the definition of "supervisor" with more than one year of experience as a supervisor in federal government.
- Manager means employees who accomplish work by directing the duties of an organizational unit with accountability for the success of specific line or staff functions.

**Note:** Managers also monitor and evaluate the progress of the organizational unit toward meeting goals and making adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources. Generally, managers supervise supervisors.

- Probationary supervisor means employees who meet the definition of "supervisor" and are in probationary status subject to 5 CFR Part 315, Subpart I and 27-PM.
- Subordinate supervisor means employees who meet the definition of "supervisor" and who are the direct reports of a manager or executive.

**Note:** Subordinate supervisors may be frontline supervisors, managers, or executives.

## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### B Scope

An FSA GS, CO, or RMA employee that is a new supervisor, manager, or executive, hired on or after July 25, 2014 and has never held a supervisory appointment in USDA or has not successfully completed the USDA agency or other federal department level approved new supervisor program, must complete the approved USDA new supervisor training program.

- Training should commence immediately after appointment by utilizing agency webinars, supervisor functions, and regulatory required courses. The courses must be completed during the first 90 calendar days.
- All new supervisor training **must** be completed within one year of beginning the appointment.

### C Completion of Training and Assessment as a Condition of Supervisory Probation

The USDA new supervisor training standards comprise the following six elements:

- administrative and regulatory functions,
- leadership competencies,
- developing others,
- accountability and performance management,
- human capital management, and
- need dependent elements.

Employees **must** attend the scheduled HRD webinars and complete the supervisor functions and regulatory required training. Employees may begin the additional elements at their own pace. New supervisors should note the following events when developing their timeline:

- at nine months, HRD will run a report and new supervisors should have completed 75 percent of their training requirements, and
- at 11 months, employees who have **not** completed 90 percent of their training are at risk of **not** completing the probationary period.

**Note:** For employees that have not completed 90 percent of their training within 11 months, their names will be submitted to the HRD Labor and Employee Relations Branch.

## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### C Completion of Training and Assessment as a Condition of Supervisory Probation (Continued)

Probationary supervisors **must** successfully complete **all** components of the required new supervisor training program **before** the end of their one-year supervisory probationary period. The FSA and RMA human resources director or designee may grant an extension to new supervisors to complete the training under the following conditions:

- required service of more than 60 continuous days as part of a military deployment,
- leave of more than 60 continuous days under the Family and Medical Leave Act,
- have partially completed a supervisory probation. In such cases, the deadline to complete the new supervisory training can **only** be extended so that the employee completes the required training within one year of their current supervisory appointment, or
- as required or permissible under a superseding authority.

If an extension is granted, new supervisor training is no longer a requirement to complete the new supervisor probationary period, but the training **must** still be completed by the employee in the timeframe given by the FSA and RMA HRD Director.

For supervisors hired between July 25, 2014, and February 22, 2015, HRD LEDB will work closely with supervisors to develop a reasonable timeframe for curriculum completion. New supervisors:

- will receive an e-mail from HRD, LEDB for a consultation, and

**Note:** On a case-by-case basis, HRD, LEDB will determine whether new supervisor training should be waived as a condition of probation.

- will receive an invitation by e-mail inviting them to attend a mandatory webinar on new supervisory training.

Supervisors hired after February 23, 2015:

- will receive an e-mail invitation within two weeks of onboarding, inviting them to attend a mandatory new supervisor's webinar, and
- will have the new supervisor curriculum added to their learning plan in AgLearn.

The failure of a new GS supervisor to complete the required training and standard assessment during their probationary period will be reassigned to another position in accordance with 5 CFR Part 315, Subpart I. See Exhibit 1.

CO supervisors **must** see 27-PM, "County Office Classification, Employment, and Pay Administration", subparagraph 304 D for conditions of probation.

## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### D Standards for Experienced Supervisor Training

Each experienced supervisor and their manager shall work together to establish an Individual Development Plan (IDP), identifying the competencies for development and specific activities to increase the supervisor's proficiency in the identified competencies. The competency dictionary and experiential learning suggestions can be found on the HRD intranet site at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>.

HRD will communicate mandatory training and developmental requirements for experienced supervisors. Training standards established by the USDA Virtual University will be approved by the Training Officer Consortium and implemented across USDA. As mandatory training is established throughout the year, FSA and RMA will communicate it to the supervisors.

Completion of the experienced supervisor training and development requirements will be certified by the supervisor's manager as part of the annual performance review process.

### E Timelines for Completing New Supervisory Training

The following shall be **completed during the first 90 calendar days**:

- New supervisors will receive an e-mail from the HRD, LEDB, during their first 14 calendar days, with instructions to complete FSA and RMA specific learning opportunities. These blended learning opportunities will provide an introduction of the newly appointed supervisor training requirements, the new employee orientation process for supervisors, and USDA's FSA and RMA organizational culture and history.
- The new supervisor training topic, Supervisor Functions and Regulatory Requirements, can be found at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>. The topics in this element outline many of the mandatory competencies of the supervisor and the rules that govern the most basic interactions between a supervisor and the employees.

HRD maintains a current copy of FSA and RMA-approved curriculum at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>.

**All** required mandatory training placed on each employee's AgLearn "to do list" throughout the year **must** be completed by each individually established deadline.

Course requirements and learning resources for elements two through five that are provided in the departmental curriculum **must** be **completed during the first year**. The curriculum can be found on the HRD web site at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>. All required courses will be added to the employee's AgLearn "to do list" by HRD, LEDB. Supervisors will be e-mailed additional learning resources, as they become available. Questions regarding this should be directed to HRD, LEDB at [leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov).

## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### F Waivers

The FSA and RMA human resources director or designee may waive all or part of the training requirements for a supervisor that was hired from another department or agency. If the supervisor has previously completed the supervisory probationary period as required by 5 CFR 315 Subpart I and 27-PM before being hired by FSA or RMA the training requirements may be waived.

The FSA and RMA human resources director or designee will verify that the supervisor possesses the skills required by the USDA new supervisor training standard by completing FSA-346 (Exhibit 2), which can be found at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>. Request for a waiver **must** be submitted to HRD, LEDB at [leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov) within 30 calendar days of date of appointment.

Within 90 calendar days of receiving the HRD notification of approval, the supervisor **must** complete the **required** new supervisor training assessment in AgLearn, with a minimum score of 80 percent.

If the FSA and RMA human resources director or designee finds there are missing skills, the employee **must** take the training elements to develop the missing skills. The FSA and RMA human resources director or designee **must** account for the training for the development of the missing skills. The training requirements for Ethics for Supervisors may **not** be waived.

Within 90 calendar days of the start date at USDA, the supervisor **must** complete **all** training identified in the approved FSA-346. Employees **must** send a notice of completion by e-mail to HRD, LEDB at [leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov).

Failure to complete the waiver requirements within 90 calendar days will void FSA-346 and the employee **must** complete the entire curriculum within one year.

## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### G Accessing Resources

To access:

- **AgLearn** courses:
  - go to **www.aglearn.usda.gov**,
  - CLICK “**Login**” and enter user ID and password or CLICK “**Login With LincPass**”,
  - in the “**Search Catalog**” field, enter the name of the course user wants to take and user will be directed to a link by which the course can be launched,
  - after completing the course, complete the course survey, and
  - on the user’s AgLearn homepage, under “**Learning Status**”, check **completed work** to ensure that course completion was recorded.
- **Human Resource University (HRU)** courses:
  - go to **www.hru.gov**,
  - CLICK “**Register Now**” and enter the requested information,  
  
**Note:** User’s **must** enter their USDA e-mail address.
  - CLICK “**Attend a Course**” to find the courses,
  - search for the free and online courses, and
  - scroll down the list to find the desired course.

### H Certification Process for Other Existing Courses or Courses Being Developed

All agency supervisory training **must** be coordinated with the HRD, LEDB, Chief Learning Officer. This will allow substitutions to the list of required courses and competency alignment with DR 4040-412-002. Go to HRD’s web site at **<http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>** for a list of courses that may be substituted.



## 2 Requirements to Complete New Supervisor Training (Continued)

### H Certification Process for Other Existing Courses or Courses Being Developed (Continued)

On a case-by-case basis and a request for a review, HRD, LEDB will request a certification of existing courses that were designed for specific audiences within the agency. Contact the HRD, LEDB, Chief Learning Officer at [leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:leadership.training@wdc.usda.gov). Be prepared to provide the following information at a minimum:

- name of course,
- length of course,
- audience,
- learning objectives,
- all course materials,
- delivery method, and
- name of instructors.

### I Changes in Course Curriculum

From time to time, courses and learning resources may be removed or updated based on new requirements from the USDA Virtual University, FSA, or RMA. Newly developed internal courses may be approved that meet the requirements of 1 or more competencies as outlined in DR 4040-412-002. HRD will maintain a current copy of FSA and RMA-approved curriculum at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/ledb.htm>.

### J Supervisor Comprehensive Assessments

The Virtual University (VU) will create and post in AgLearn, a comprehensive assessment that the supervisors **must** complete after they have finished all the other required training elements. All supervisors will be required to obtain a minimum score of 80 percent on the assessment in order to receive credit for completing the required training curriculum. Supervisors who do not pass the assessment with the minimum score will be permitted to retake the assessment until they can obtain the minimum score. However, they must successfully complete the comprehensive assessment by the end of their probationary period.

**5 CFR Part 315, Subpart I and 27-PM, Paragraph 304****1 [5 CFR Part 315.907] Failure to Complete the Probationary Period**

In compliance with the following 5 CFR Part 315, Subpart I, any new GS supervisor who does not complete their probation, because of failure to complete the required training and standard assessment, will be reassigned to another position.

**(a) Satisfactory completion of the prescribed probationary period is a prerequisite to continued service in the position. An employee who, for reasons of supervisory or managerial performance, does not satisfactorily complete the probationary period is entitled to be assigned, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, to a position in the Agency of no lower grade and pay than the one the employee left to accept the supervisory or managerial position.**

**(b) A nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial employee who is demoted into a position in which probation under §315.904 is required and who, for reasons of supervisory or managerial performance, does not satisfactorily complete the probationary period is entitled to be assigned to a position at the same grade and pay as the position in which he or she was serving probation. The employee is eligible for repromotion according to Agency promotion policy.**

**(c) The Agency must notify the employee in writing that he or she is being assigned according to this section.**

**2 27-PM, Paragraph 304, Probationary Periods****A Basic Probationary Period**

All supervisors hired after April 30, 1985, under a permanent appointment **must** serve a one-year probationary period. New supervisors may receive full or partial credit for previously completed time and training requirements and credits will be assessed in the waiver process.

**B Managerial Probationary Period**

Employees selected as county executive directors (CED's) who have not previously completed a managerial probationary period **must** serve a one-year managerial probationary period, beginning with the date they are placed in the CED position. The basic probationary period and the managerial probationary period may overlap.

**C Separation During Probationary Period**

All probationary employees may be separated if work performance or conduct does not demonstrate fitness or qualifications for continued employment. See 22-PM, County Office Personnel Management.

## FSA-346, FSA and RMA Supervisory Training Waiver Form

Following is an example of FSA-346.

This form is available electronically.

<b>FSA-346</b> (05-05-15)	<b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b> Farm Service Agency Risk Management Agency	1. Agency Employee Works For:  <input type="checkbox"/> FSA <input type="checkbox"/> RMA		
<b>FSA AND RMA SUPERVISORY TRAINING WAIVER FORM</b>				
<b>NOTE:</b> As permitted by DR 4040-412-002, Section 5(C)(1)(c), a Mission Area Human Resource Director (MAHRD) may waive the new supervisor training requirement under certain conditions, if an experienced supervisor is hired from another Federal Department. This form documents the waiver decision and <b>must</b> be submitted to the USDA Virtual University through FSA and RMA HRD.				
<b>PART A – EMPLOYEE INFORMATION</b>				
2A. Employee Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	2B. Employee Telephone Number (Include Area Code)	2C. Employee Email Address		
3A. Duty Station: <input type="checkbox"/> WDC <input type="checkbox"/> County: [Enter County]  <input type="checkbox"/> State: [Enter State] <input type="checkbox"/> Other: [Specify]	3B. Duty Station Address (Include Zip Code)			
4. AgLearn ID	5. Hire Date at USDA (MM-DD-YYYY)	6. Agency and Department before coming to USDA		
7. Date Employee Completed Supervisory Probation		8. Years of Federal Supervisory Experience		
<b>PART B - SKILLS VERIFICATION</b>				
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Verify whether the employee has each of the outlined skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the employee has the identified skill, no further training is necessary.</li> <li>If the employee does <b>not</b> possess the skill, the name of the training and completion date <b>must</b> be documented.</li> </ul>				
<b>Table 1. Supervisor Administrative Functions and Regulatory Requirements</b>				
Topic	Performance Indicator	Possesses Skill		Training and Completion Date
		YES	NO	
Pay and Leave Policies	Approves and validates leave using the Agency's system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Time and Attendance	Approves and validates timesheets using the Agency's system, for example, WebTA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Managing Telework	All eligible employees who are interested have telework agreements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prohibited Personnel Practices and Merit Systems Principles	Manages work unit in compliance with Prohibited Personnel Practices and Merit System Principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ethics for Supervisors	Adheres to all policy and Federal laws.	(May not be Waived)		
Workplace Violence and Prevention	Takes appropriate action to prevent and/or address workplace violence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Federal EEO Process	Complies with all EEO policies resulting in zero substantiated complaints.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Table 2. Individual Leadership Competencies</b>				
Leveraging Diversity	Attains maximum performance from each team member. Provides each team member with maximum career development/growth opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Conflict Management	Fosters creative tension and manages and resolves conflicts/disagreements in a constructive manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Teambuilding	Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals. Fosters team commitment and trust.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## FSA-346, FSA and RMA Supervisory Training Waiver Form (Continued)

FSA-346 (05-05-15)		Page 2 of 2		
Topic	Performance Indicator	Possesses Skill		Training and Completion Date
		YES	NO	
<b>Table 3. Developing Others</b>				
Mentor/Coach Employees	Provides long-term career growth guidance. Uses coaching skills to match employee performance to stated expectations or goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Managing AgLearn as a Supervisor	Appropriately populates employee learning plans on AgLearn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing and Managing IDP's	Ensures development of IDP's that incorporate personal and organizational goals for 100 percent of eligible employees, and on request.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Table 4. Accountability and Performance Management</b>				
Increase Employee Performance	Establishes and communicates work objectives that support organizational goals and supports employees so that they meet expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Empower Employees	Delegates tasks and responsibilities in a manner that affords employees the opportunities to best use their talents and increase their skill sets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create Performance Plans	All employees have a performance plan that links to organizational mission and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Conduct Performance Feedback Meetings	Conducts midyear reviews. Conducts end-of-year reviews.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Handle Unacceptable Performance	Expediently identifies performance issues and provides timely guidance and opportunities for employees to meet expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Handle Misconduct	Expediently identifies conduct issues and decisively addresses misconduct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Table 5. Human Capital Management</b>				
Hiring Practices	Ensures that positions align with unit and organizational requirements, if part of supervisor's role. Contacts appropriate HRD specialists for staffing and classification issues. Conducts hiring interviews and checks references.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Onboarding New Hires	100 percent of new hires on-boarded within prescribed timeframe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
USERRA and Hiring Veterans	Meets Agency and Department goals for hiring veterans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hiring and Supervising Persons with Disabilities	Complies with EEO regulations and policies relating to employing individuals with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>PART C - MAHRD VERIFICATION STATEMENT</b>				
I attest that the <b>employee</b> , (9) _____, possesses all of skills outlined in the USDA New Supervisor Training Standard and has passed the New Supervisor Training Assessment in AgLearn within 90 calendar days of hire date at USDA.				
10. Date Assessment Completed		11. Score Attained		
12A. First Name	12B. Last Name	13. Mission Area		
14A. Supervisor Signature	14B. Telephone Number (Include Area Code)	14C. Email Address	14D. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	
To be signed by FSA or RMA Human Resources Director <b>only</b> .				
15A. Human Resource Director			15B. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	