

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

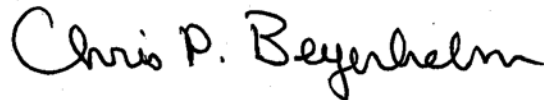
Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-2959

**For:** RMA and FSA Employees

**2016 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 applications 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 cumulative 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 applications for the PVSA and the Call to Service Award. All applications shall be submitted no later than **Thursday, April 7, 2016**.

Disposal Date	Distribution
August 1, 2016	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 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 January 1, 2015, and must end by December 31, 2015.**

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: 1) each group member must contribute at least 25 hours; and 2) 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 the **2016 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 between a young adult and an adult.

Hours by Award	Bronze	Silver	Gold
<b>Young Adults (16-25)</b>	100 – 174 hours	175 – 249 hours	250+ hours
<b>Adults (26 and older)</b>	100 – 249 hours	250 – 499 hours	500+ hours
<b>Groups</b> <i>(Two or more people with each member contributing at least 25 hours toward the total)</i>	200 – 499 hours	500 – 999 hours	1,000+ hours
<b>President's Lifetime Achievement Award:</b> Individuals who have completed 4,000 or more hours in their lifetime. <i>(Each employee may receive only one Lifetime Achievement Award.)</i>			

## 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 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 (groups will receive one certificate, one letter and one pin).

In recognition of their efforts, and to represent their colleagues in their respective award categories, the individual(s) with the highest number of hours will be invited to accept their certificates at the Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Ceremony.

If the individuals described about are not within the Washington, DC commuting area, the agency will consider whether funding priorities will permit travel for the employees to attend the Honor Awards Ceremony.

## 3 Application Submissions and Contact Information

### A Submitting Applications

Each application form (**Exhibit 2**) **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 recognition certificate.

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-2959**" in the "**Form Number**" box.

### 3 Application Submissions and Contact Information (Continued)

#### B RMA Submitting Applications

All applicants must adhere to subparagraph 3 A and submit the application to **Kathryn.Quillen2@rma.usda.gov** by **Thursday, April 7, 2016**.

All RMA applications submitted to **Kathryn Quillen** by April 7<sup>th</sup> shall be compiled into one RMA 2016 PVSA submission. The RMA submission shall include the following:

- the RMA employees completed applications and
- the completed Summary Spreadsheet.

**Note:** The Summary Spreadsheet will be provided to and completed by **Kathryn Quillen**.

**Kathryn Quillen** will then submit the 2016 RMA PVSA applications and Summary Spreadsheet to the Human Recourses Division PVSA mailbox, **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, by **noon Thursday, April 14, 2016**.

#### C FSA Submitting Applications

All applicants must adhere to subparagraph 3 A and submit all applications to **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, by **Thursday, April 7, 2016**.

#### D Contact Information

Send questions by email to the following:

- for RMA, **Kathryn.Quillen2@rma.usda.gov**; and
- for FSA, **FFAS.PVSANominations@wdc.usda.gov**.

## 2016 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility

## A General Criteria for Eligible Service

General Criteria for Eligible Service (the criteria are progressive; i.e., the volunteer work must be eligible in each criterion)		
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)?  <b>Note:</b> 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

## 2016 USDA PVSA General Criteria and Eligibility (Continued)

**B Examples of Eligible Service**

<b>Examples of Eligible Service</b> (each assumes the General Criteria above are met)		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Eligible</b>	<b>Not Eligible</b>
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 members' 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-2959" in the "Form Number" box.



### President's Volunteer Service Award Application Form

**Employee Name:**

(FN LN as it would appear on certificate)

**Group Award Name:**

(If applicable)

**Agency:**

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

**Duty Station:**

(city and state)

**Office Telephone Number:**
**USDA Email Address:**
**Volunteer Record:**

Please identify the qualifying organization, activity performed, date ranges (mm/dd/yy – mm/dd/yy), and number of hours.

You may attach additional sheets, as necessary.

Qualifying Organization and Role (example: Girl Scout Council of The Nation's Capital, Scout Leader)	Date Ranges (in chronological order)	Hours	Title of Verifying Official*	Signature of Verifying Official
<b>Total Hours:</b>				

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

Updated January 2016

## President's Volunteer Service and Call to Service Award Application Form (Continued)

## President's Volunteer Service Award Application Form

Page 2

Please select which of the Administration's Key Focus Areas covers your area of volunteerism, or "Other".  
(Select only one.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Education</b> Encourage and support our nation's youth to achieve success in the classroom, increase high school graduation rates and improve overall literacy and academic standards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Economic Opportunity</b> Provide services to create economic opportunity for community members struggling financially, including housing assistance, job training and financial literacy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Environmental Stewardship</b> Support energy efficiency and environmental conservation and restoration services within our communities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Veterans and Military Families</b> Show your support to those who make the ultimate sacrifice by providing services to veterans, active duty members and their families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Healthy Futures</b> Brighten futures by providing access to health care, disease prevention, health promotion initiatives and health literacy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disaster Services</b> Strengthen the capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to help prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster situations and increase community resilience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b>

**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 (except if applying for a Lifetime Achievement Award) and, based upon my service record, I am eligible for the following award (Mark an X where appropriate):

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
<b>Young Adults (16-25)</b>	100 – 174 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	175 – 249 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	250+ hours <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Adults (26 and older)</b>	100 – 249 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	250 – 499 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	500+ hours <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>President's Lifetime Achievement Award:</b> 4,000 or more hours in the employee's lifetime <i>(Each employee may receive only one Lifetime Achievement Award.)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I am contributing all hours on this application toward a Group Award:</b> <i>(These hours may not be counted toward an individual award, with the exception of a Lifetime Achievement Award.)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Updated January 2016