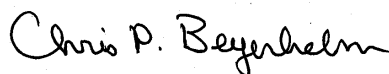


For: FSA Employees

2016 FSA Administrator’s Awards for Service to Agriculture (AASA)

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

An honorary awards program is an important tool in creating a workplace where the extra efforts shown by individuals and teams are given due recognition. The AASA is the highest honorary award that management can nominate an employee for within FSA.

The 2016 AASA covers accomplishments completed during the period **October 1, 2014, through June 30, 2016**. The AASA process consists of the following 3 stages:

- State and National Offices (includes Kansas City and St. Louis) (first stage)
- regional areas (second stage)
- national phase (third stage).

The selected recipients from each stage will continue on to the next stage.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- detailed procedures for submitting nomination forms AD-2096’s for AASA
- two new categories for the AASA Program
- that the team member limit has been increased to 25 members
- that the National ceremony will be held in November 2016
- an example of AD-2096 (Exhibit 2)
- that Notice PM-2963 is obsolete to clarify eligibility for the new categories in Exhibit 1.

C Contact

State and County Office employees may contact the DAFO AASA designee at **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV**.

National Office employees may contact the HRD, AASA Program Coordinator, at **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov**.

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2016	All FSA Employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice PM-2965

2 AASA Program Provisions

A Eligibility

STC and COC members, and all FSA employees are eligible for AASA.

B AASA Categories

The following are AASA Categories.

Category	Description
Civil Rights Leadership Award	This award recognizes individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives.
Management Excellence Award	This award recognizes individuals with exceptional accomplishment in transforming FSA into a model organization through management efficiencies and workforce strength, diversity, and talent.
Personal and Professional Excellence Award	This award recognizes individuals who consistently demonstrate an exceptional level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of FSA.
Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award	This award recognizes teams who worked to complete a specific significant project as a team, contributing to FSA's goals and objectives. The team may include members from different units within FSA or from outside FSA. Working as a team, rather than individuals, should be emphasized.
Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives.
Heroism and Emergency Response Award	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.
Award for Support Service	This award recognizes individuals who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, and PT, usually GS-9 or equivalent, and below, whose dedication and contributions enhance management excellence. Achievements may reflect dollar savings, system benefits, increased productivity, or improved procedures or techniques. The employee's knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out these duties far exceeds expectations and contributes to meeting the office's or FSA's goals and objectives.
Outstanding Accomplishment in Outreach Award	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who provided significant contributions in expanding programs and services to underserved communities and demonstrated outstanding leadership by increasing the participation of targeted groups in FSA programs and services.

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

B AASA Categories (Continued)

Category	Description
Non-Supervisor of the Year Award	<p>This award recognizes individuals who hold a non-supervisory position and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA. Three awards for this category will be offered, and individuals will be recognized from each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Centers (GS and CO employees) • State Offices • National Office.
Supervisor of the Year Award	<p>This award recognizes individuals who hold a supervisory position and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA. Three awards for this category will be offered, and individuals will be recognized from each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Centers (GS and CO employees) • State Offices • National Office.
FSA Lifetime Achievement Award (NEW)	<p>This award recognizes individuals who have 30 years or more of service in FSA and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA. Four awards for this category will be offered, and individuals will be recognized from each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Centers (GS and CO employees) • State Offices • National Office.
FSA Newcomer or Novice Employee of the Year Award (NEW)	<p>This award recognizes individuals who have 5 years or less of service in FSA and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA. Four awards for this category will be offered, and individuals will be recognized from each of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Centers (GS and CO employees) • State Offices • National Office.

Notes: See Exhibit 1 for criteria for each category.

AASA category descriptions that illustrate “**individuals**”, without “and/or” directly after, indicate that **team nominations** will **not** be **accepted** for that category.

AASA category descriptions that illustrate “**individual and/or teams**” indicate that both individual and team nominations will be accepted but they will not be competing against one another. If both are submitted they will compete in separate levels (one for individuals and one for teams) resulting in the potential for 2 awards to be given for those categories.

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

C Timeline

Stage 1 – State and National Offices

State and National Offices shall submit nominations for AASA according to the following:

- submit AD-2096's to the specified mailbox/person, referenced in subparagraph 3 A, no later than **COB Wednesday, July 20, 2016**
- State Offices' selected recipients shall be forwarded to the Regional Area Facilitator no later than **COB Tuesday, August 9, 2016**
- National Office selected recipients shall be forwarded to the National Office specified mailbox, **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, no later than **COB Tuesday, August 9, 2016**.

Stage 2 – Regional Areas

Regional area facilitators shall:

- receive the State Offices' selected recipients nominations (AD-2096) by **COB Tuesday, August 9, 2016**
- forward regional areas' recommended recipients to the DAFO AASA Designee, **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV** no later than **COB Monday, August 29, 2016**

Stage 3 – National Phase

The National Office shall take the following action after receiving AD-2096's:

- The DAFO AASA Designee shall route the regional areas' selected recipients to **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, no later than **COB Friday, September 9, 2016**.
- national phase selected recipients shall be determined no later than **COB Tuesday, October 11, 2016**.

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

D AD-2096's

An individual or team does **not** need to meet **all** the criteria listed to be nominated. The criterion serves as an outline for the reviewing committee members in reviewing AD-2096's and making recommendations to the designated authorized official for each stage.

Any employee may nominate another employee for AASA. However, AD-2096's shall be routed through the supervisor of the nominated employee.

Approving officials (AD-2096, Part F) shall review each nomination to ensure that the justification for nomination follows the guidelines in AD-2096, Part D. Each narrative should describe in detail why the contribution/accomplishment is significant and deserving of formal recognition. Detailed narratives assist the reviewing committees when reviewing and rating all nominations.

Note: The nominated employee's first-line supervisor/manager signs AD-2096, Part F as the reviewing official. If disapproving the nomination, then the reviewing official shall provide a justification for the disapproval in AD-2096, Part G and submit the nomination to the approving official.

AD-2096 is available from the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online web site at <http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

To verify that AD-2096 was received, request a "return receipt" according to the following:

- in the e-mail message, CLICK "Options"
- in the "Tracking" box, check (✓) "Request a delivery receipt" or "Request a read receipt".

Note: This will notify the sender about a single e-mail message.

AD-2096's **must** be filled out completely and include the following:

- AASA category for which the individual/team is being nominated
- name of nominee or team name, if a team nomination

Note: The employee's/team's name should be written as it is to be printed in the booklet and on the keepsake. The maximum allowed per a team is 25 members. Provide written justification to AAOM for exceptions to the maximum number of team members. Teams with more than 20 team members, that will also be considered for the Abraham Lincoln Honors Awards (formerly known as the Secretary's Honor Awards) will have to reduce the team members (by top performers) down to 20 team members, which remains the limit by the Department. (**No exception**).

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

D AD-2096's (Continued)

- position title, official duty station, and telephone number of nominee
Note: If a team nomination, list information for **all** team members.
- team leader, if a team nomination
- citation, **not** to exceed 25 words, as it should be printed in the booklet
- narrative justification detailing the basis for recognition, **not** to exceed 2 pages.

Notes: Accomplishments are based on FY 2015 and partial FY 2016, **October 1, 2014, through June 30, 2016.**

See:

- Exhibit 2 for an example of AD-2096
- Exhibit 3 for assistance with writing the narrative justification.

3 Submitting AD-2096's for the 3 Stages

A Stage 1 – State and National Offices

Any employee may nominate another employee for AASA. However, AD-2096's should be routed through the supervisor of the nominated employee.

All AD-2096's and any Microsoft attachments shall be submitted no later than **COB Wednesday, July 20, 2016.**

Note: See Exhibit 2 for the sample AD-2096 and Exhibit 3 for documentation guidelines.

Supervisors/managers shall:

- review and evaluate **all** employees to ensure that all deserving employees are considered for nomination
- ensure that the reviewing official who signs AD-2096, Part F is the nominated employee's first-line supervisor/manager.

Note: If the reviewing official disapproves the nomination, then the reviewing official shall submit a written justification, and the nomination shall be submitted with the disapproval justification to the approving official. See AD-2096, Part G, "Disapproval Justification".

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3 Submitting AD-2096's for the 3 Stages (Continued)

A Stage 1 – State and National Offices (Continued)

AD-2096, Part F, “Approval”, the approving official will be the nominated employee’s second-line supervisor/manager.

State Offices shall:

- ensure that AD-2096 and any Microsoft attachments shall be submitted by the approving official to the **state facilitator** no later than **COB Wednesday, July 20, 2016**
- develop a reviewing committee to review, score, and recommend the potential State Offices’ selected recipients
- ensure that the State reviewing committees consists of a facilitator and 3 to 8 representatives with no more than 1 from the following positions:
 - State Office program chief or specialist
 - Administrative Officer or Executive Officer (AO/EO)
 - DD
 - CED
 - FLM
 - FLO
 - PT, CO or GS
 - any other non-supervisory position.

Notes: The members of each State reviewing committee and the facilitator shall be submitted to the DAFO AASA designee at **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV** no later than **COB Friday, July 8, 2016**.

If possible, the State reviewing committee members shall not be the same members for the regional area reviewing committees.

The State reviewing committees shall:

- review and rate AD-2096’s
- ensure that a diversified group of nominees are recommended
- submit recommendations for awards to their SED.

SED’s **will** determine the State recipients and submit them no later than **COB Tuesday, August 9, 2016**, to the regional area facilitator for consideration for the regional area awards. State Offices’ selected recipients will continue on to Stage 2 – Regional Areas.

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3 Submitting AD-2096's for the 3 Stages (Continued)

A Stage 1 – State and National Offices (Continued)

The National Office shall:

- ensure that AD-2096 and any Microsoft attachments are submitted by the Approving Official to the specified mailbox, **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, no later than **COB Wednesday, July 20, 2016**
- develop a reviewing committee to review, score, and decide the National Offices' selected recipients
- ensure that the National Office reviewing committee consist of a facilitator and 1 Director from each of the following deputy administrative areas and offices:
 - Administrator's staff or office
 - DACO
 - DAFLP
 - DAFO
 - DAFP
 - DAM
 - OBF
 - OCIO
 - OCR.

Note: National Office reviewing committee members shall not be the same members for the national phase reviewing committee.

The National Office reviewing committee shall determine the recipients and submit them no later than **COB Tuesday, August 9, 2016**, to **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov**, for consideration for the National Phase Awards.

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3 Submitting AD-2096's for the 3 Stages (Continued)

B Stage 2 – Regional Areas

The regional areas will be grouped into the following 5 regions.

- **Midwest** consisting of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.
- **Northeast** consisting of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.
- **Northwest** consisting of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming.
- **Southeast** consisting of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
- **Southwest** consisting of Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah.

Each regional area will have a facilitator and reviewing committee that consists of an SED selected by DAFO, who will then select 1 member from their region in the following positions:

- Administrative Officer or Executive Officer (AO/EO)
- State Office program chief or specialist
- DD
- CED
- FLM
- FLO
- PT, CO or GS
- any other non-supervisory position.

Notes: This will ensure fairness among the States.

The names of the members of each regional reviewing committee and the facilitator shall be submitted to the DAFO AASA designee at **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV** no later than **COB Friday, July 22, 2016**.

If possible, the State reviewing committee members shall not be the same members for the regional area reviewing committees.

Each selected SED will develop a reviewing committee to review, score, and recommend the potential regional area recipients.

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3 Submitting AD-2096's for the 3 Stages (Continued)

B Stage 2 – Regional Areas (Continued)

The regional area reviewing committee shall:

- review and rate AD-2096's
- ensure that a diversified group of nominees are recommended
- submit recommendations to the regional area facilitator.

Regional areas' recommended recipients shall be forwarded by the regional area facilitator to the DAFO AASA designee at **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV** no later than **COB Monday, August 29, 2016**. DAFO will determine the final selections and route all regional areas' selected recipients to **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **COB Friday, September 9, 2016**. Stage 2 – Regional Areas' selected recipients will continue on to Stage 3 – National Phase.

C Stage 3 – National Phase

The Administrator will designate specified persons to be members of the national phase reviewing committee. The regional areas and National Office nominations will be reviewed and scored by the national phase reviewing committee. The national phase reviewing committee will then present to the Administrator their recommendations for the 2016 AASA recipients. The Administrator will consider the national phase reviewing committee recommendations and make a decision. The national phase selected recipients shall be determined no later than **COB Tuesday, October 11, 2016**. The selected recipients will be commended through a congratulations e-mail that will include the logistics of the National ceremony.

The reviewing committee shall consist of a facilitator and the Deputy Administrator (or designee) or office director (or designee) from the following program areas or offices, unless specified by the Administrator.

- Administrator's staff or office
- DAFP
- DAFLP
- DAFO
- DACO
- DAM
- OCR
- OBF
- OCIO
- labor organizations (observer)
- HRD, Benefits and Performance Management Section (BAPMS) (facilitator).

Note: National Office reviewing committee members shall not be the same members for the national phase reviewing committee.

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4 Nomination Screening

A Screening Process

The nomination screening process will take place during Stage 1 – State and National Offices after the nomination deadline, **Wednesday, July 20, 2016**, and shall conclude the week of **August 7, 2016**.

State Office facilitators shall compose a list of all nominees and send to the DAFO AASA designee at **RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV**, no later than **Monday, July 25, 2016**. DAFO will then compile the State list of nominees, separated by State, and send to **RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **Friday, July 29, 2016**. HRD, Employee and Labor Relation Branch and OCR shall ensure that the nominees are suitable for the AASA award.

National Office facilitator shall compose a list of all nominees and send to HRD, Employee and Labor Relation Branch and OCR to ensure that the nominees are suitable for the AASA award.

5 Responsibilities

A Facilitator Responsibilities

Each State Office, Regional Area, and the National Office will have a facilitator who shall:

- receive AD-2096's and ensure that all information is complete
- coordinate the reviewing committee meetings
- communicate and ensure that deadlines are met
- notify, by e-mail, the nominator and SED of the selected recipient and provide the specified recognition electrons for the selected recipient
- be computer savvy and knowledgeable about maneuvering and managing a SharePoint site

Notes: The SharePoint site will be the direct source for information for the reviewing committee. The SharePoint site will host the nominations submitted for the specified State, National Office, region, or national phase. The scoring chart will also be posted to the specified SharePoint site.

Based on the time allotted, if the SharePoint site is not sufficient, then an alternative method for reviewing and scoring the nominations will be provided to the facilitators.

- have administrative access to the designated SharePoint site

5 Responsibilities (Continued)

A Facilitator Responsibilities (Continued)

- prepare and distribute AD-2096's to the reviewing committee members
- attend the reviewing committee meeting to provide technical advice and document the reviewing/recommendation process
- route the selected recipients to the next stage/designated person
- coordinate the tasks and activities for recognition of the selected recipients (certificates, time-off awards and/or keepsakes).

State Offices facilitators shall **not** notify selected recipients; SED will determine the State recipients and notify them of their selection.

National Office facilitator shall notify, by e-mail, the division director and nominator of the selected recipient; the division director will then notify the selected recipient of his/her selection.

Regional area facilitators shall **not** notify selected recipients; DAFO will make the final decision about regional area recipients and notify SED; SED will notify the selected recipients.

National phase facilitator shall notify, by e-mail, the selected recipients, nominator, and SED or division director of the recipient.

B Reviewing Committees Responsibilities

The reviewing committees shall be a diverse panel.

Each State Office, regional area, National Office, and national phase will have a reviewing committee to:

- review AD-2096's
- score the nominations; the scoring method will be standard for all stages
- make recommendations; ensure that a diversified group of nominations is recommended.

Note: The national phase reviewing committee recommendation will be forwarded to the Administrator for a final decision.

C Administrator Responsibilities

The Administrator shall review the national phase reviewing committee recommendations and determine Stage 3 – National Phase recipients for the 2016 AASA's.

Note: The 2016 AASA recipients will be officially recognized at the formal ceremony.

6 AASA Selected Recipients Recognition Ceremony

A Stage 1 – State and National Offices

Selected recipients shall be recognized during an employee recognition event hosted by the selected recipient's State or National Office **before the AASA Award Ceremony held in November 2016**. The Administrator, Associate Administrator, or a member of the Executive Leadership Committee (ELC) may attend the event in person or via virtual connectivity. The selected recipient will be recognized with a certificate. The certificates will be provided to the State facilitator.

Notes: The employee engagement recognition event is **required**.

B Stage 2 – Regional Areas

Selected recipients shall be notified during a recognition event hosted by the State Office **before the AASA Award Ceremony held in November 2016**. The Administrator, Associate Administrator, or a member of the Executive Leadership Committee (ELC) may attend the event in person or via virtual connectivity. The selected recipient will be recognized with an 8-hour time-off award for an individual recipient and a 4-hour time-off award for a team award.

Note: The employee engagement recognition event is **required**.

C Stage 3 – National Phase

Selected recipients shall be recognized at the national ceremony held in November 2016. The actual date and location of the ceremony will be determined at a later date. The Administrator shall present the awards for the national phase recipients. Keepsakes will be provided to the selected recipients.

Note: In addition, National Office employees who are recipients of the national phase will receive a time-off award, comparable to Stage 2 – Regional Area recognition.

AASA Categories

A Civil Rights Leadership Award

Description: This award recognizes **individuals** for their valuable contributions and commitments made in support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives.

Notes: This is an individual award; therefore, no team nominations will be accepted.

This award is not limited to OCR employees.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- involvement or participation in professional organizations, task groups, or committees, and programs directly affecting the recruitment, training, and advancement of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in USDA and/or FSA
- active and sustained involvement to increase and diversify the workforce at FSA, including specific efforts at recruitment of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities

Note: This is only required for supervisor nomination.

- active involvement in expanding, promoting, or enforcing civil rights
- personal involvement in social issues impacting women, minorities, and persons with disabilities
- establishment of a positive work environment that ensures fair and equitable treatment of all employees and applicants
- planning or supporting special interest programs and activities which enrich cultural understanding of diverse groups by attending and encouraging participation of employees
- demonstrates a marked improvement/increase in FSA programs, services, and benefits provided to women and/or minorities.

AASA Categories (Continued)

B Management Excellence Award

Description: This award recognizes **individuals** with exceptional accomplishment in transforming FSA into a model organization through management efficiencies and workforce strength, diversity, and talent.

Note: This is an individual award; therefore, no team nominations will be accepted.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- *Engage FSA employees to transform FSA into a model agency* - engaging employees to transform FSA into a high-performing, inclusive agency that benefits from leadership at all levels, generating opportunities to listen to employees' concerns and ideas, and designing and implementing beneficial systemic changes to processes that affect employee satisfaction and human resources, developing FSA leadership skills and enhancing employee development programs
- *Provide civil rights services to FSA employees and customers* - demonstrating a commitment to making FSA a model in the Federal Government for respecting the civil rights of its employees and constituents; ensuring equal employment opportunity, civil rights, and program delivery through a comprehensive approach of fair and equitable treatment of all employees and applicants, as well as improving program delivery to every person entitled to FSA various services, assisting USDA in addressing past errors, learning from its mistakes, and moving forward to a new era of equitable service and access for all
- *Coordinate outreach and improve consultation and collaboration efforts to increase access to FSA programs and services* - coordinating and measuring the performance of strategic outreach efforts to ensure that all Americans have equal and fair access to key FSA programs and services, promoting FSA values and priorities in efforts such as the Peoples' Garden, in order to enhance the public knowledge of sustainable growing practices and the importance of the American farm community; developing or expanding enterprise-wide, results-driven initiatives, and coordinated efforts; increasing the viability and profitability of small farm operators and beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; coordinating various FSA services for priority populations, such as farm workers; and improving compliance with Executive Directives requiring consultation and improved collaboration with tribal governments

AASA Categories (Continued)

B Management Excellence Award (Continued)

- *Leverage FSA to increase performance, efficiency, and alignment* - maintaining effective financial controls so that program dollars achieve the outcomes for which they were intended; implementing strategies to strengthen FSA's financial management by improving internal control systems and by implementing electronic systems that permit real-time reporting; optimizing the use of Recovery Act funding in the creation of jobs and economic opportunities across the country; expanding the use of performance metrics to track areas of success and those needing improvement across FSA, aligning resources to achieve the highest outcome and improve program delivery; implementing performance management strategies, including Project Labor Agreements to improve the effectiveness of FSA contracting and procurement activities across the country
- *Optimize USDA "green" or sustainable operations* - establishing an integrated strategy to support sustainability and to achieve reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; working toward sustainable operations by decreasing energy intensity, increasing renewable energy use, conserving water, promoting pollution prevention, waste reduction, and recycling; implementing sustainable building design, construction, and operation; increasing green procurement; promoting electronic product stewardship; and embracing environmental management systems to achieve sustainable operation goals
- *Enhance the FSA human resources process to recruit and hire skilled, diverse individuals to meet the program needs of FSA* - reforming the hiring process to ensure a streamlined, user-friendly environment for both the applicant and the hiring manager, leading to the identification and selection of the most talented and competent workforce possible; increasing diversity while addressing current and future skills gaps; realigning human resources policies relative to talent management to further support USDA's transforming recruitment and retention initiatives; addressing the gap between employee engagement and performance expectations; fully utilizing applicable hiring authorities; increasing recruiting and utilization of interns; improving and enhancing efficiencies in the recruitment process; improving employee recognition programs; and promoting a USDA culture that recognizes high-performing, results-focused employees, employee wellness, and work/life balance.

AASA Categories (Continued)**C Personal and Professional Excellence Award**

Description: This award recognizes **individuals** who, over time, consistently demonstrate an exceptional level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of FSA.

Note: This is an individual award; therefore, no team nominations will be accepted.

Criteria: This category includes notable achievements in economic analysis, program delivery, administrative management, improvements to the safety, health, and well-being of others, or any mission-related activity of FSA. This category also includes significant accomplishments in improving customer service, both internal and external to FSA.

D Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award

Description: An award granted annually to **teams** who worked to complete a specific significant project as a team, contributing to FSA's goals and objectives. The team may include members from different units within FSA or from outside FSA. Working as a team should be emphasized, rather than individual effort.

Note: This is a team award; therefore, no individual nominations will be accepted.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting or exceeding all team objectives
- demonstrates results with specific benefits to FSA and/or USDA
- significant contributions made by each team member are included in AD-2096.

AASA Categories (Continued)

E Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award

Description: An award granted annually to **individuals and/or teams** for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives.

Note: Individual nominations will not be competing against one another. This is an individual award, no team nominations will be accepted.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting strategic objectives
- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting program goals
- employee's accomplishments are explicitly linked to and in support of one of FSA's strategic objectives or a management initiative, defined in the FSA Strategic Plan
- establishes program goals that improve FSA's performance in relation to the strategic objectives and institutes a system to measure and/or monitor these goals resulting in improving FSA's performance
- supports a sustainable, competitive agricultural system - the economic vitality and quality of life in rural America and the U.S. economy at large depends on a financially healthy agricultural system; ensuring that American farmers and ranchers are prosperous and competitive; have access to new and international markets; can manage their risks, and are supported in times of unusual economic distress or disaster
- enhances global food security - working to promote enhanced food security include ongoing activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as training local populations in state-of-the-art food preservation techniques, helping village populations develop local food supply chains from producer to consumer, and teaching local populations to restore their watersheds.

AASA Categories (Continued)**F Heroism and Emergency Response Award**

Description: An award granted annually to **individuals and/or teams** who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

Note: Individual and team nominations will not be competing against one another because of the efforts a team can possibly have over an individual.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- demonstrates an outstanding level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response
- provides assistance to FSA customers experiencing critical needs that resulted in a marked improvement to the critical situation.

G Award for Support Service

Description: An award granted annually to recognize **individuals** who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, and PT's, usually GS-9 or equivalent, and below, whose dedication and contributions enhance management excellence. Achievements may reflect dollar savings, system benefits, increased productivity, or improved procedures or techniques. The employee's knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out these duties far exceeds expectations and has contributed to meeting the office's or FSA's goals and objectives.

Note: This is an individual award; therefore, no team nominations will be accepted.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- demonstrates high-quality performance of the technical responsibilities for his or her position
- demonstrates outstanding customer service to internal and external customers
- performs at a level that substantially exceeded the performance standards of the position
- develops and/or implements a system or methodology that improves program delivery either internally or externally.

AASA Categories (Continued)**H Outstanding Accomplishment in Outreach Award**

Description: This award recognizes **individuals and/or teams** who demonstrate significant contributions in expanding program and services to underserved communities, as well as demonstrate outstanding leadership in expanding targeted groups' participation in FSA program and services.

Note: Individual and team nominations will not be competing against one another because of the efforts a team can possibly have over an individual.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- planned or conducted a significant outreach event for a targeted group
- demonstrated sustained effort in conducting targeted outreach
- demonstrated sustained effort in increasing program participation for targeted groups
- provided leadership in developing innovative outreach strategies
- developed significant partnerships with community based organizations, tribal governments and others
- contributed to improving FSA's image between socially disadvantaged and other targeted groups.

I Non-Supervisor of the Year Award

Description: This award recognizes **individuals** in a non-supervisory position who have contributed to improving the quality and service of FSA.

Stage 1 – State and National Offices

The State will recognize 2 individuals in this category. The 2 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (both GS and CO employees)
- State Office.

The National Office will recognize 1 individual from this category.

AASA Categories (Continued)**I Non-Supervisor of the Year Award (Continued)****Stage 3 – National Phase**

The national phase will recognize 3 individuals for this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (both GS and CO employees)
- State Office
- National Office.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- Professionalism – Employee conducts himself or herself in a manner consistent with the values and goals of the agency. Employee demonstrates an above average knowledge of his or her job responsibilities and delivers a high quality services.
- Innovation – Presenting new ideas and helpful suggestions that has helped improve productivity, safety, workflow, efficiency, profitability, or enhanced the overall success of the agency.
- Teamwork – Consistently assist and work with fellow employees without having to be asked; eagerly participates in group or team projects; and thinks of others and the needs of the enterprise before thinking of self.
- Leadership – Setting a good example or being a positive role model for other employees; demonstrates high integrity, ethical behaviour, exceptional work habits, a strong work ethic and strong character that influence his or her fellow employees.
- Customer Focus – Employee consistently recognizes and meets the needs and requirements of internal/external (where applicable) customers. Employee demonstrates compassion in dealing with the customer, being mindful of how his or her attitude and actions are perceived. Employees use problem-solving techniques, when necessary, to satisfy the customer's needs and reflects a positive image of the agency.
- Quality – Employee consistently uses a systematic approach to accomplishing his/her responsibilities, taking care to minimize errors. Employee acknowledges and takes pride in ownership of the day-to-day processes for which he/she is responsible and utilizes initiative where necessary to meet overall goals.

AASA Categories (Continued)

J Supervisor of the Year Award

Description: This award recognizes **individuals** in a supervisory position who have contributed to improving the quality and service of FSA.

Stage 1 – State and National Offices

The State will recognize 2 individuals in this category. The 2 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (both GS and CO employees)
- State Office.

The National Office will recognize 1 individual from this category.

Stage 3 – National Phase

The national phase will recognize 3 individuals for this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (both GS and CO employees)
- State Office
- National Office.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- Professionalism – Employee conducts himself or herself in a manner consistent with the values and goals of the agency. Employee demonstrates an above average knowledge of his or her job responsibilities and delivers a high quality services.
- Innovation – Presenting new ideas and helpful suggestions that has helped improve productivity, safety, workflow, efficiency, profitability, or enhanced the overall success of the agency.
- Teamwork – Consistently assist and work with fellow employees without having to be asked; eagerly participates in group or team projects; and thinks of others and the needs of the enterprise before thinking of self.
- Leadership – Setting a good example or being a positive role model for other employees; demonstrates high integrity, ethical behaviour, exceptional work habits, a strong work ethic, and strong character that influence his or her fellow employees.

AASA Categories (Continued)**J Supervisor of the Year Award (Continued)**

- Customer Focus – Employee consistently recognizes and meets the needs and requirements of internal/external (where applicable) customers. Employee demonstrates compassion in dealing with the customer, being mindful of how his or her attitude and actions are perceived. Employees use problem-solving techniques, when necessary, to satisfy the customer's needs and reflects a positive image of the agency.
- Quality – Employee consistently uses a systematic approach to accomplishing his/her responsibilities, taking care to minimize errors. Employee acknowledges and takes pride in ownership of the day-to-day processes for which he/she is responsible and utilizes initiative where necessary to meet overall goals.

K Lifetime Achievement Award for 30 Years or more of FSA Service**Stage 1 – State Offices**

The State will recognize 3 individuals in this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers ((1) GS and (1) CO employees)
- State Office (1 employee).

The State Office will submit the three individuals to the regional phase.

Stage 2 – Regional Area

The regional area will select 3 individuals in this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers ((1) GS and (1) CO employees)
- State Office (1 employee).

The regional area will submit 3 individuals to the national phase from this category.

Stage 3 – National Phase

The national phase will recognize 4 individuals for this category. The 4 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (1 GS and 1 CO employee)
- State Office
- National Office.

AASA Categories (Continued)

K Lifetime Achievement Award for 30 Years or more of FSA Service

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- Professionalism – Employee conducts himself or herself in a manner consistent with the values and goals of the agency. Employee demonstrates an above average knowledge of his or her job responsibilities and delivers a high quality services.
- Innovation – Presenting new ideas and helpful suggestions that has helped improve productivity, safety, workflow, efficiency, profitability, or enhanced the overall success of the agency.
- Teamwork – Consistently assist and work with fellow employees without having to be asked; eagerly participates in group or team projects; and thinks of others and the needs of the enterprise before thinking of self.
- Leadership – Setting a good example or being a positive role model for other employees; demonstrates high integrity, ethical behaviour, exceptional work habits, a strong work ethic and strong character that influence his or her fellow employees.
- Customer Focus – Employee consistently recognizes and meets the needs and requirements of internal/external (where applicable) customers. Employee demonstrates compassion in dealing with the customer, being mindful of how his or her attitude and actions are perceived. Employees use problem-solving techniques, when necessary, to satisfy the customer's needs and reflects a positive image of the agency.
- Quality – Employee consistently uses a systematic approach to accomplishing his/her responsibilities, taking care to minimize errors. Employee acknowledges and takes pride in ownership of the day-to-day processes for which he/she is responsible and utilizes initiative where necessary to meet overall goals.

AASA Categories (Continued)**L FSA Newcomer or Novice Award for 5 Years or less of FSA Service****Stage 1 – State Offices**

The State will recognize 3 individuals in this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (1 GS and 1 CO employees)
- State Office (1 employee).

The State Office will submit the three individuals to the regional phase.

Stage 2 – Regional Area

The regional area will select 3 individuals in this category. The 3 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (1 GS and 1 CO employees)
- State Office (1 employee).

The regional area will submit 3 individuals to the national phase from this category.

Stage 3 – National Phase

The national phase will recognize 4 individuals for this category. The 4 individuals will be from the following locations:

- Service Centers (1 GS and 1 CO employee)
- State Office
- National Office.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishments of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities are as follows:

- Professionalism – Employee conducts himself or herself in a manner consistent with the values and goals of the agency. Employee demonstrates an above average knowledge of his or her job responsibilities and delivers a high quality services.
- Innovation – Presenting new ideas and helpful suggestions that has helped improve productivity, safety, workflow, efficiency, profitability, or enhanced the overall success of the agency.

AASA Categories (Continued)**L FSA Newcomer or Novice Award for 5 Years or less of FSA Service (Continued)**

- Teamwork – Consistently assist and work with fellow employees without having to be asked; eagerly participates in group or team projects; and thinks of others and the needs of the enterprise before thinking of self.
- Leadership – Setting a good example or being a positive role model for other employees; demonstrates high integrity, ethical behaviour, exceptional work habits, a strong work ethic and strong character that influence his or her fellow employees.
- Customer Focus – Employee consistently recognizes and meets the needs and requirements of internal/external (where applicable) customers. Employee demonstrates compassion in dealing with the customer, being mindful of how his or her attitude and actions are perceived. Employees use problem-solving techniques, when necessary, to satisfy the customer's needs and reflects a positive image of the agency.
- Quality – Employee consistently uses a systematic approach to accomplishing his/her responsibilities, taking care to minimize errors. Employee acknowledges and takes pride in ownership of the day-to-day processes for which he/she is responsible and utilizes initiative where necessary to meet overall goals.

Example of AD-2096

The following is an example of AD-2096.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

**ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS FOR SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE (AASA)
NOMINATION FORM**

Please read the instructions below thoroughly before completing the AASA Nomination Form.

INSTRUCTIONS

- On the basis of the Recognition Type, this form must be completed in its entirety in order to be accepted as a nomination.
- Nominations will be accepted via email only. Please ensure that the email trail (Electronic Approval) has final approval from the nominee's second-line supervisor/manager before submitting.
- There is a two-page limit for additional attachments for Part D – Justification for Nominations.
- Ensure the validity of all nomination accomplishments.
- Once submitted, AASA Nomination Form recipients will be screened at the HRD level for equal employment opportunity violations and disciplinary actions.
- Send this form and any attachments (Microsoft Word) via email as follows:

State Offices

To: State Facilitator

Subject: FSA AASA Nominations

Note: Contact DAFO AASA Designee, RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV, to determine the State Facilitator.

Headquarters

To: RA.FSA_AASANominations@wdc.usda.gov

Subject: FSA AASA Nominations

- To verify that the nomination was received, please send return receipt as follows:
 1. Click "View" then "Options."
 2. Once in "Options" under "Voting and tracking options," select "Request a delivery receipt for this message" and/or "Request a read receipt for this message."
- If further assistance is needed:
 1. State and County Office employees please email the DAFO AASA Designee at RA.FSA.AdminAward@WDC.USDA.GOV.
 2. National Office employees please email the AASA Program Coordinator at RA.FSA_AASANominations@WDC.USDA.GOV.

AD-2096 (06-09-16)

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

Note: The name of the individual nominee or group name should be written **exactly** as the recipients want their name to appear in the booklet and on the keepsake.

This form is available electronically. AD-2096 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (06-09-16) Farm Service Agency		1. Date Prepared:
ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS FOR SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE (AASA) NOMINATION FORM		
PART A – GENERAL INFORMATION (Complete for all nominations)		
2. Name of Submitting Program Area/Work Unit	3. Recognition Type (Check only "one" box) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (Also Complete Part B) <input type="checkbox"/> Group (2-25) (Also Complete Part C)	
4. Individual Nominee or Group Name	5. Period Covered (Month/Year only)	
6. AWARD CATEGORIES (Check only "one" box) The contributions must have occurred or results realized within the last calendar year. For explanations on the award categories, please see applicable PM Notice or other guidelines.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights Leadership Award <input type="checkbox"/> Management Excellence Award <input type="checkbox"/> Personal and Professional Excellence Award <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award <input type="checkbox"/> Heroism and Emergency Response Award <input type="checkbox"/> Award for Support Service <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Accomplishment in Outreach Award <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Supervisor of the Year Award <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor of the Year Award <input type="checkbox"/> FSA Lifetime Achievement Award <input type="checkbox"/> FSA Newcomer or Novice Employee of the Year Award		
7. Suggested Citation (25 words or less)		
PART B – COMPLETE FOR INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS ONLY		
1. Name (Last, First, Middle)	2. Phonetic Name Spelling (If Applicable)	
3. Position Title	4. Telephone Number (Area Code)	5. Fax Number (Area Code)
6. Organization and Deputy Administrator		7. Office Location Address (Include room number)
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)		
If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html , or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-6992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at program.intake@usda.gov .		
Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).		

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

Note: The group’s name should be written **exactly** as the recipients want their names to appear in the booklet and on the keepsake.

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PART C – COMPLETE FOR GROUP SUBMISSION ONLY

1. Name of Group (As indicated in Part A)	2. Name of Group Leader (Last, First, Middle)	
3. Phonetic Name Spelling (if applicable)	4. Office Location Address (Include room number)	5. Organization and Deputy Administrator

6. Team Members: Team recognition should be limited to the top 25 significant contributors.

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING MANDATORY INFORMATION FOR EACH GROUP MEMBER:

A. Name (Last, First, Middle) <i>(Alphabetical Order)</i>	B. Office Location Address <i>(Include room number)</i>	C. Phone Number <i>(Area Code)</i>	D. E-mail Address	E. Supervisor Name

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

AD-2096 (06-09-16)

Page 3 of 5

PART C – COMPLETE FOR GROUP SUBMISSION ONLY (Continuation)

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING MANDATORY INFORMATION FOR EACH GROUP MEMBER:

A. Name (Last, First, Middle) (Alphabetical Order)	B. Office Location Address (Include room number)	C. Phone Number (Area Code)	D. E-mail Address	E. Supervisor Name

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

AD-2096 (06-09-16)

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PART D – JUSTIFICATION FOR NOMINATION

All nominations must clearly describe the significance of the contribution/accomplishment being recognized relative to the category selected, the impact on the Agency and/or the Department successfully meeting its mission or strategic goals, the degree to and the results by which the contribution substantially exceeds normal job expectations, and any measurable or non-measurable benefits.

There is a two page limit for additional attachments.

NOTE: Avoid the use of general or vague statements; emphasizing job responsibilities rather than accomplishments; in-house terminology and technical language; statistics without using a comparison; retirement testimonials; lengthy statements and excessive superlatives; and descriptions of outside personal activities.

Attach up to two (2) additional Microsoft Word sheets, if needed.

The FSA 2014 Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements Team is being recognized for its outstanding accomplishment of providing Agency customers with exceptional service through state of the art program decision tools and outreach and education opportunities.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to delivering the highest level of customer service and helping to ensure a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers. FSA also must keep pace with complex new programs and the changing dynamics of agriculture through modernization of FSA operations and continuous improvement.

With this overall Agency goal in mind and enactment of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) that authorized programs and services that impact every American and millions of people around the world, FSA set about rapidly implementing major programs.

The Cooperative Agreements team was established to carry out two Farm Bill provisions: partnering with universities to develop web-based decision tools and training for new farm programs authorized by the Farm Bill; and partnering with State extension services to provide outreach and education for farmers and ranchers.

Partnering with Universities to Develop Web-Based Tools. Section 1614 of the 2014 Farm Bill set a new path for the Agency to cooperatively partner with universities to develop web-based tools and training for the new Agricultural Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage program (ARC/PLC), new Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy), and Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

To meet the aggressive program implementation deadlines, the FSA Cooperative Agreements Team had to determine the project requirements of the new web-based tools, create cooperative agreements, and build the financial and legal support. In addition, FSA partnered with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to ensure the web-based tools incorporated risk management aspects to further increase the level of service for farmers.

Under an extremely tight time frame to develop a project plan, FSA notified all 1862 and 1890 universities of the opportunity to submit a proposal. With project requirements identified, FSA announced a competitive process among eligible universities and worked with RMA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Economic Research Service, and Office of the Chief Economist to evaluate proposals under a streamlined review process and make recommendations to the USDA Farm Bill Working Group.

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

AD-2096 (06-09-16)

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PART E – CONTACT INFORMATION

Nominator (*Person recommending this nomination*):

1. Name	2. Organization and Deputy Administrator
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3. Work Mailing Address (*Include physical address if WDC*)

4. E-Mail Address	5. Daytime Number (<i>Area Code</i>)	6. Fax Number (<i>Area Code</i>)
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PART F – APPROVAL (REVIEW/CLEARANCES)

For all nominations, complete Items 1A through 3C below:

1A. Signature of Recommending Official	1B. Title	1C. Date
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2A. Signature of Reviewing Official	2B. Title	2C. Date
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Disapproving Recommendation (Check if apply. Type disapproval justification in Part G)

3A. Signature of Approving Official	3B. Title	3C. Date
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PART G – DISAPPROVAL JUSTIFICATION

Provide a justification that explains the disapproval reason(s) of the nomination.

Documenting AASA

AASA documentation should justify reasons why an individual's or team's service to agriculture is outstanding, clearly exceeds job requirements, and deserves honorary recognition by the Administrator.

Documentation **must** convince various organizational screening levels and the Administrator's Reviewing Committees that the nominee has accomplished more than the job required, or that the results of those accomplishments, while within the job's responsibilities, are highly significant and clearly warrant recognition. The following questions may stimulate ideas for developing a nomination.

- What was done that deserves recognition?
 - Was it unique, a new approach, exceptionally creative?
 - If so, why?
- What was the effect of the accomplishment?
 - Was it local, regional, national, or international in scope?
 - Was it a model for others?
- Did the accomplishment result in increased program effectiveness?
 - Did it reduce costs?
 - Did it result in more effective operation or better public service?
 - Describe the results.
- What distinguished the nominee's profession or career? What special qualities or capabilities make the individual outstanding?
- What specific performance far exceeded job requirements?
 - Was the work done with less than usual supervision, help, or resources?
 - What obstacles were overcome?
 - What new techniques or procedures were developed?

The justification should avoid:

- emphasizing job responsibility rather than accomplishment
- retirement testimonials
- quoting statistics and making progress statements without comparing them to earlier periods or circumstances
- general or vague statements about what was done, without referring to how it was done or by whom.