

For: FSA Federal and County Employees and All FAS National Office Employees

2002 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A

Purpose

This notice informs employees that HRD, Training and Development Branch (TDB) is accepting nominations for the 2002 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program.

B

Contact

If there are any questions about this notice, contact Regina Duncan, TDB, at 202-418-9053 or TDD 202-418-9107.

2 Fellows Program Information

A

Fellows Program Overview

The USDA Graduate School Career Development Programs Division in 1996 established the Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program. Although the Program offers both 12 months and a 6-month session that give senior-level Federal personnel at the GS/GM 13-15 or equivalent grade level the opportunity to work with Congress, applications are only being accepted for the 6-month session at this time. The selectees will gain an in-depth understanding of the legislative processes of the Senate and House of Representatives.

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<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>May 1, 2002</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>All FSA Federal and County Employees and All FAS National Office Employees; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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2 **Fellows Program Information (Continued)**

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**Fellows Program
Overview
(Continued)**

Assignments. Placements are available in both the Senate and House of Representatives, in Members' offices, and on the staff of a Congressional committee.

Special seminars. Throughout their assignment, Fellows attend special seminars on current political and legislative issues.

Credit option. The University of Southern California's Washington Public Affairs Center offers participants who complete the Fellowship Program the opportunity for graduate credit.

The Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellows Program includes the following components:

- **Congressional Assignment** - benefits both the Congressional office and the employee
- **Orientation** - mandatory intensive 2 weeks' training provided in January 2002 for 6-month Fellowships
- **Special Seminars** - Graduate School staff will conduct educational developmental seminars for the Fellows throughout their assignments
- **Mentoring** - a senior faculty member will serve as a mentor to provide support and guidance during the Fellowship.

Note: See Exhibit 1 for a description of these components.

B

Cost

Tuition cost for a 6-month Fellowship is \$3,400.

Federal employees' tuition should be coded to their originating office. Non-Federal employees should use nonpayroll allotments and the normal checkwriting process. Allotment increases to cover tuition costs may be requested from BUD.

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2 Fellows Program Information (Continued)

C

Program Dates

Following are major dates for the 2002 Fellows Program.

2002 Fellows Program	Dates
All nomination packages due in TDB	November 13, 2001
Two-week Orientation session starts (mandatory)	January 7, 2002
Assignments begin (estimated date)	January 28, 2002

D

Accommodation

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in this training should contact Regina Duncan, TDB at 202-418-9053 or TDD 202-418-9107 **by November 13, 2001.**

3 Nomination Process

A

Nominee

Prerequisites

Nominees must:

- be grades GS/GM 13-15 or equivalent level
 - be career employees in FAS National Offices and all FSA Federal and County employees
 - be interested in an in-depth knowledge of the legislative-branch processes and culture
 - have ability to work independently with minimum supervision
 - be willing to explore new ways of working to achieve results
 - have demonstrated flexibility in work habits.
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3 Nomination Process (Continued)

B Nomination Packages

To be considered for the Fellows Program, eligible employees must submit a nomination package containing the following:

- a completed AD-2015 (Exhibit 2), including supervisory signature

Note: AD-2015 is available on <http://intranet.fsa.uda.gov/>.

- an approved SF-182
- a current SF-171, OF-612, or detailed resume signed and dated by applicant with a current home address
- a cover letter from the applicant describing how the levels of specific skills represent their strongest professional competencies
- a written statement addressing how this training will also improve performance in current and expected job assignments

Note: Emphasis should be on how your abilities or competencies in the following areas contributed to your success:

- oral
 - written
 - interpersonal communication
 - leadership
 - initiative
 - technical competence
 - list of education and training courses taken in the last 5 years.
- a letter from the applicant's supervisor or Agency Executive Resources Board assessing his or her potential and need for this training and development experience.

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3 Nomination Process (Continued)

C Sending Nomination Forms

Send the original and 2 copies according to the following.

Method of Delivery	Address
U.S. Mail	REGINA DUNCAN USDA FSA HRD TDB STOP 0574 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE SW WASHINGTON DC 20250-0574
FedEx	REGINA DUNCAN 2101 L STREET NW. SUITE 303-A WASHINGTON, DC 20037

D Deadline

TDB **must receive** all nominations with a completed package by **COB November 13, 2001**. Nominations received after this date will not be considered. Substitution of items will not be permitted after the deadline.

4 Agency Nomination Process

A Participants by Organization

Employees selected will be organizationally distributed as follows:

- FAS may support 1 nominee for 6-month Fellowship.
 - FSA may support 1 nominee for 6-month Fellowship.
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B Participant Selection

Participants will be selected for nomination as follows:

- TDB reviews applications for eligibility
 - candidates will be considered without discrimination for any nonmerit reason such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, or disability
 - a panel will review and rank employee nominations using criteria established Agencywide.
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4 Agency Nomination Process (Continued)

**B
Participant
Selection
(Continued)**

Recommendations are made to the Administrator based on the following.

IF the nominee is an employee of...	THEN...
FSA	the panel recommends final participants and refers participants to the Administrator or designee for approval for the allotted number of spaces approved.
FAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Executive Advisory Group makes recommendation based on panel rankings• the Administrator or designee selects final participants based on recommendation.

**C
Panel
Membership**

TDB will select and facilitate panels. Separate panels will be established for each Agency. The Selection Panel for nominee will consist of:

- 3 voting Agency employees
- 1 TDB nonvoting representative
- 1 EEO nonvoting representative
- 1 Union nonvoting representative (Union participation will be based on agency's selection panel).

Note: No panel will be held if the number of applications received does not exceed the number of positions available.

**D
Agency
Nomination**

TDB notifies employees of the nomination decision and submits a completed nomination package to the Graduate School, USDA for review and selection decision.

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5 Selection Process

A

Graduate School, USDA

Graduate School staff selects Fellows as follows:

- reviews each nomination package
 - matches individuals' skills, experience and preferences, as they match the requirements for each assignment received from the Congressional office
 - makes the selections for Fellowships
 - notifies Agency and employees of assignment.
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B

Labor Management Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes.

Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

Description of FY 2002 Congressional Fellows Program

FY 2002 Congressional Fellows Program

Do you have the desire to work on Capitol Hill? The Leadership Development Academy's Congressional Fellows Program will give you an unparalleled opportunity to absorb the culture of the Hill and gain valuable experience that can only come from working with Congress. The Congressional Fellows Program provides an opportunity for senior level personnel (GS/GM 13-15 or uniform service equivalents), to work in congressional offices or with committee staff members to develop legislative issues. This program will give you an opportunity to:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of legislative-branch processes and culture;
- Develop invaluable contacts beneficial to you and your agency;
- Attend regular educational/developmental seminars; and
- Apply for graduate credit from The American University School of Public Affairs and The George Washington University's School of Public Management.

Program Design

The Graduate School, USDA's Congressional Fellows Program enrolls one-year and six-month candidates at the start of the legislative session, in January. Mid-year candidates are not encouraged, but special arrangements can be made if circumstances delay beginning the assignment in January.

The Congressional Fellows Program office supports each Fellow during their assignment through mentoring and educational seminars. The result is a structured and successful program with measurable impact for participants, their agencies and the congressional offices they serve.

Congressional Assignment

The Graduate School, USDA will negotiate a six-month congressional assignment for each Fellow in a congressional office or committee. Finding the right niche is the key to a successful experience. The Congressional Fellows Program staff will work to find a placement that best matches the skills and strengths of each Fellow by considering both the Fellows interests and the agency's needs. The assignment will be based on each Fellows area of expertise.

Orientation

Before beginning their assignments, Fellows will participate in an intensive two-week orientation designed to familiarize them with legislative procedures. The orientation will include presentations by former members of Congress, congressional staff, representatives of trade associations and lobbyists, members of the media, former Fellows and academic scholars who focus on the legislative process and political issues.

Special Seminars

To enrich the experience, the Graduate School, USDA sponsors periodic educational seminars throughout the assignments. In addition to the special seminars, Fellows are encouraged to attend The Leadership Development Academy's Programs for Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidates.

Mentoring

The Graduate School, USDA wants to ensure your success. The program staff of the Congressional Fellows Program is available throughout the fellowship. This support and guidance will continue after the assignment is completed. As new Fellows enroll in the program, former Fellows will be asked to serve as their mentors.

Graduate Credit

Fellows have the opportunity to apply for graduate credit from The American University School of Public Affairs and The George Washington University's School of Public Management.

Nomination Procedure

To be considered for a fellowship, please submit the following information to the Congressional Fellows Program Office through your agency's training office or executive development coordinator (Click on the name of the form to see an online version):

- A detailed resume or SF-171 (SF-171, page 2; SF-171 Work Statement, SF-171 Continuation, SF-171, page 4).
- An approved agency training form (DD1556, SF-182, HHS 350 or other agency approved form).
- A cover letter describing the specific skills that represent your strongest professional competencies, and a statement describing how the fellowship will benefit you and your agency.
- A letter from your supervisor or agency Executive Resources Board assessing your executive potential and need for this training/developmental experience.

AD-2015, FY 2002 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellowship Program Nomination Form

REPRODUCE LOCALLY. Include form number and date on reproductions.

AD-2015
(10-15-01)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

**FY 2002 GRADUATE SCHOOL,
USDA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
NOMINATION FORM**

**NOTE: Deadline - Completed Nomination Package must be received in the Training and Development Branch by COB Tuesday, November 13, 2001.
This is an 6-Month Program.**

1. Indicate appropriate Agency (Check one below): FSA <input type="checkbox"/> FAS <input type="checkbox"/>		2. Name			
3. Division/Staff (Include Office Address)		4. Room No. and STOP Code	5. E-Mail Address		6. Office Telephone Number ()
7. Position Title		8. Full-Time Federal Employee? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		9. Series and Grade	10. FAX Number
11. Please notify your supervisor that you are submitting your name for consideration of the Congressional Fellowship Program. Have your supervisor sign below to indicate that they have been notified and are aware that selectees are away from their job for a minimum of 6 months plus 2 weeks for mandatory orientation. NOTE: The travel and lodging costs will be funded by the employee's office travel budget.					
12A. Supervisor's Signature		12B. Date		12C. Supervisor's Telephone Number ()	
12D. Print Supervisor's Name and Title			12E. Supervisor's Mailing Address		

13. Required information for the Completed FY 2002 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellowship Program Nomination Form.

Please put this completed FY 2002 Graduate School, USDA Congressional Fellowship Program Nomination Form, including supervisory signature on top of the other required information listed below.

- A. An approved SF-182, Request Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training.
- B. Current SF-171, OF-612, or detailed resume signed and dated by applicant with current home address.
- C. A cover letter from the applicant describing how the level of specific skills represent their strongest professional competencies.
- D. A written statement addressing how this training will also improve performance in current and expected job assignments. Emphasis should be on how your abilities or competencies in the following areas contributed you your success.
 - Oral, written, and interpersonal communication.
 - Leadership.
 - Initiative.
 - Technical competence.
 - List of education and training courses taken in the last 5 years.
- E. A letter from applicant's supervisor or Agency Executive Resources Board assessing his or her potential and need for this training and development experience.

Please submit this nomination form and information listed in Item 13 (the original and 3 copies). All completed nomination packages must be received in the Training and Development Branch by **COB Tuesday, November 13, 2001.**

14. Please send the original and three copies of the completed nomination package using either of the methods listed below:

<p>If sending by Regular U.S. Mail, send to:</p> <p>Regina Duncan USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB STOP 0574 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20250-0574</p>	OR	<p>If sending by Special Delivery, hand carry or FEDEX, send to:</p> <p>Regina Duncan USDA-FSA-HRD-TDB 2101 L. Street, NW, Suite 303-A Washington, DC 20037</p>
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NOTE: FAXED copies are not accepted.

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