

For: FFAS Employees

President’s Volunteer Service Awards and Call to Service Award

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

During the 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush issued a challenge to all Americans to make time to help their neighbors, communities, and Nation through volunteer service. He called on each person to dedicate at least 4,000 hours or 2 years to service over the course of their lives.

In 2003, President Bush created the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation (PCSCP) to recognize the valuable contributions’ volunteers are making in our Nation. The council brings together leaders from the worlds of business, entertainment, sports, education, government, non-profit organizations, and the media. PCSCP created the President’s Volunteer Service Award 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 President’s Volunteer Service Award recognizes those who have achieved a certain standard, measured by the number of hours served over a 12-month period or cumulative hours served over the course of a lifetime. FFAS will highlight our extraordinary volunteers by honoring their efforts at a special presentation during the Secretary’s Honor Awards ceremony on October 11, 2007.

B Purpose

This notice informs all offices of the opportunity to submit nominations for the President’s Volunteer Service Awards and Call to Service Award. All nominations must be submitted by COB **Tuesday, August 7, 2007.**

| Disposal Date | Distribution |
|-----------------|--|
| October 1, 2007 | All FAS, FSA, and RMA Employees; State Offices relay to County Offices |

Notice PM-2600

1 Overview (Continued)

C Equal Opportunity/Workforce Diversity Policy

In keeping with the Secretary's initiative to promote equal opportunity in employment and programs, agencies are encouraged to consider nominations from all segments of the workforce. All nominees are eligible for the same level of recognition.

It is the Department's policy and practice to prohibit discrimination against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, national origin, or sexual orientation.

D Contact

If there are questions or additional information is needed, contact Stephanie Brown by either of the following:

- e-mail to stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-401-0684.

2 Eligibility

A Employee Eligibility

All USDA employees are eligible for the award based upon their hours of service to qualifying organizations.

B Qualifying Organization/Activity

To be recognized, service activities must meet national or community needs in the areas of youth achievement, parks and open space, health communities, public safety, and emergency responses. Activities **must** be unpaid and may **not** include disciplinary-related or court-ordered community service.

The majority of "faith-based" volunteer activities are considered acceptable service for the President's Volunteer Service Award including, but not limited to, volunteering to teach Sunday School; volunteering at Vacation Bible School; painting and cleaning at a church, mosque, or synagogue; collecting canned food; mentoring children after school; and volunteering at a shelter. Activities that take place during a normal worship, service such as ushering, participation in the choir, or other activities practiced during worship hours, are considered outside the President's Volunteer Service Award guidelines.

Activities associated with influencing legislation or elections to a public office, engaging in protests, engaging in union activities, and participating in events that are likely to include political advocacy, are **not** considered acceptable service for purposes of these awards.

Notice PM-2600

2 Eligibility (Continued)

C Criteria

This table provides criteria for the Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

| Award | Criteria |
|--------------|---|
| Bronze | Employees must have provided a minimum of 100 hours and a maximum of 249 hours of service to a qualifying organization over the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007. |
| Silver | Employees must have provided 500 hours or more of service to a qualifying organization over the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007. |
| Gold | Employees must have provided 500 hours or more of service to a qualifying organization over the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2007. |

For a President's Call to Service Award, employees must have provided 4,000 hours or more of service to a qualifying organization over the employee's lifetime.

D Recognition

Each award recipient will receive an official President's Volunteer Service Award pin, a personalized certificate of achievement, a note of congratulations from the President of the United States, and a letter from PCSCP. The top 5 applicants, based upon their number of hours of service, in both the Call to Service and gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award will be recognized at the Secretary's Honor Awards Ceremony on October 11, 2007. One person, in each of the bronze and silver award categories, will be randomly selected to receive their awards at the Secretary's Honor Awards Ceremony in recognition of their efforts and those of their colleagues in that award category.

3 Nominations

A Completing Application Form

Nominations must include the application in Exhibit 1. All applicants will be required to certify that they have, in fact, served the number of hours for which they are claiming credit.

Notice PM-2600

3 Nominations (Continued)

B Submitting Nominations

Mail nominations packets to Stephanie Brown, HRD, Employee Program Branch, using either of the following addresses.

| USPS | FedEx |
|--|--|
| Stephanie Brown USDA/FSA/HRD/EPB 1400 Independence Ave SW Stop 0595 Washington DC 20250-0595 | Stephanie Brown USDA/FSA/HRD/EPB 1280 Maryland Ave SW Rm 487 Washington DC 20024-2142 |

Nominations must be received by HRD by COB August 7, 2007.

C HRD Responsibility

HRD will provide the Office of Human Capital Management with a list of employees nominated for each award category, with the total number of volunteer hours performed for each employee recognized, as follows:

- Presidential Volunteer Service Awards:
 - bronze
 - silver
 - gold
- President's Call to Service Award.

