

**For:** FSA Employees

**2011 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture (AASA)**

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



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**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. Within FSA, AASA are the highest honorary awards management can bestow upon their employees.

Because of FY 2011 budget constraints, the 2011 FSA AASA ceremony will be held on September 23, 2011. Although the USDA 2011 63rd Secretary's Honor Awards nomination process is complete, FSA is proceeding with the 2011 AASA's because recognition has always been vitally important in FSA.

**B Purpose**

This notice:

- announces the 2011 FSA AASA Program
- details the procedures for submitting AD-2096's for AASA.

**C Contact**

For questions about this notice, contact Catherine Baker, FSA Awards Coordinator, by either of the following:

- e-mail at [catherine.baker@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:catherine.baker@wdc.usda.gov)
- telephone at 202-401-0687.

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**Disposal Date**

November 1, 2011

**Distribution**

All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice PM-2818

### 2 AASA Program Provisions

#### A Eligibility

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

#### B AASA Categories

The following are AASA categories.

Category	Description
Civil Rights Leadership Award	An award granted annually to both FSA employees at any organizational level and FSA supervisors. Both categories of this award recognize individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph A.
Excellence in Leadership and Management Award	An award granted annually to FSA supervisors and managers at the GS/GM-15 level <b>and below</b> at all organizational levels, whose accomplishments and performance are judged as the most outstanding, and who demonstrate the greatest combination of skills in leading people and managing activities through interactive team building, while valuing diversity. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph B.
Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award	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. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph C.
Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award	An award granted annually to a specific FSA employee or FSA work unit for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph D.
Heroism and Emergency Response Award	An award granted annually to an FSA employee or team who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph E.
Award for Support Service	An award granted annually to recognize employees who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, and program technicians, usually GS-9 or equivalent, and below, whose dedication and contributions enhance management excellence. See Exhibit 1, subparagraph F.

**Note:** See Exhibit 1 for criteria of each category.

#### C Timeline

AD-2096's shall be:

- submitted to HRD no later than **COB August 12, 2011**
- reviewed by FSA.

**Note:** DAFO and SED's **must** submit AD-2096's by e-mail to **cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **COB August 10, 2011**, to be forwarded to HRD no later than **COB August 12, 2011**.

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### 2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

#### D AD-2096's

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

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

Deputy Administrators and managers shall review each nomination to ensure the justification for nomination follows the guidelines as described 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 Committee when reviewing and rating all nominations.

**Notes:** AD-2096 is available from either of the following:

- the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online web site at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/>
- the FFAS Human Resources web site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=emr>. Under "Administrator's/Honorary Awards Form", CLICK "Honorary Awards Nomination Form".

To verify that AD-2096 was received, request a "return receipt" as follows:

- in the e-mail message, CLICK "View" and "Options"
- under "Voting and Tracking options", select the "Request a delivery receipt for this message" or "Request a read receipt for this message" box.

**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.

- position title, official duty station, and telephone number of nominee

**Note:** If a team nomination, list information for **all** team members.

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### 2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

#### D AD-2096's (Continued)

- 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 may go back up to 1 year. See:

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

### 3 Submitting AD-2096's for GS and CO Employees in County Offices

#### A CED and FLM Responsibilities

CED's and FLM's shall:

- periodically discuss potential nominees with DD
- review and critically evaluate both GS and CO employees to ensure that all deserving employees receive consideration
- submit AD-2096's **only** for clearly outstanding achievements

**Note:** See Exhibit 3 for documentation guidelines.

- submit AD-2096's to DD.

#### B DD Responsibilities

DD's shall:

- periodically discuss potential nominees with supervisors
- forward **all** AD-2096's to the State Office for consideration.

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### 3 Submitting AD-2096's for GS and CO Employees in County Offices (Continued)

#### C SED Responsibilities

SED's:

- shall review **all** AD-2096's to select individuals and teams from their State for AASA
- may nominate individuals and teams for AASA
- shall electronically sign as recommending official for AD-2096's being submitted for AASA

**Note:** The e-mail trail from SED to DAFO will serve as an electronic signature.

- shall forward AASA AD-2096's and any Microsoft Word attachments to Cindy Foister, DAFO, by e-mail at **cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **COB August 10, 2011**
- shall notify managers and supervisors of individuals and teams selected to receive 2011 AASA
- shall work with DAFO to ensure that arrangements are in place for locally facilitated AASA award ceremony.

**Note:** The team leader will receive the AASA award for group award winners.

#### D DAFO Responsibilities

Once nominations are forwarded to DAFO, DAFO shall:

- review and approve AD-2096's
- electronically sign AD-2096's as recommending individual for DAFO staff

**Note:** Forwarding AD-2096's from DAFO or Cindy Foister by e-mail to HRD will serve as an electronic signature.

- submit AD-2096's and any Microsoft Word attachments for DAFO staff **electronically** by e-mail to **catherine.baker@wdc.usda.gov** no later than **COB August 12, 2011**, with "2011 FSA AASA Nominations" in the "Subject" line
- notify SED's of winners in the State.

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### 4 Submitting AD-2096's for Employees in Washington, DC Area, Kansas City, St. Louis, APFO, and State Offices

#### A Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors shall:

- review and critically evaluate **all** employees to ensure that all deserving employees are considered for nomination
- submit AD-2096's **only** for clearly outstanding achievements

**Note:** See Exhibit 3 for documentation guidelines.

- submit AD-2096's to the Division/Staff Directors.

#### B Office Director Responsibilities

Office Directors shall:

- review AD-2096's, including those they recommended
- submit AD-2096's
- sign AD-2096's as recommending individuals
- **electronically** forward AD-2096's to the appropriate Deputy Administrator for review.

### 5 Processing AD-2096's Received From Recommending Individuals

#### A Deputy Administrator/Staff Director Responsibilities

Deputy Administrators/Staff Directors shall:

- review AD-2096's submitted
- recommend and **electronically** submit AD-2096's and any Microsoft Word attachments by e-mail to **catherine.baker@wdc.usda.gov** by **COB August 12, 2011**, with "2011 FSA AASA Nominations" in the "Subject" line
- notify supervisors and managers of individuals and teams selected to receive 2011 AASA.

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### 5 Processing AD-2096's Received From Recommending Individuals (Continued)

#### B HRD, Benefits and Performance Management Section (BAPMS) Responsibilities

HRD, BAPMS shall:

- collect all AD-2096's submitted
- route names of employees to HRD, Employee and Labor Relations Section and OCR
- ensure that nominees have no pending administrative actions
- 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
- coordinate the tasks and activities for the ceremony, keepsakes, and program booklets
- notify DAFO and the Deputy Administrators of individuals and teams selected to receive 2011 AASA.

#### C Reviewing Committee Responsibilities

Deputy Administrator's shall appoint a Reviewing Committee from each program area to:

- review AASA AD-2096's
- make final recommendations.

The Reviewing Committee may include 1 member from each of the following:

- Administrator's staff or office
- DACO
- DAFLP
- DAFO
- DAFP
- DAM
- OCR
- ITSD
- labor organizations
- HRD, BAPMS (advisory).

The Reviewing Committee shall:

- review and rate AD-2096's
- ensure that a diversified group of nominees is recommended
- submit recommendations to the Administrator for AASA's.

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**5 Processing AD-2096's Received From Recommending Individuals (Continued)**

**D Administrator Responsibilities**

The Administrator shall determine the recipients for AASA's.

**E AASA Recipient Recognition**

AASA **local recipients** shall be recognized at a ceremony on **September 23, 2011**, in Washington, DC. The Administrator shall present the awards. **Out-of-town** winners should receive recognition at local ceremonies arranged by their local offices.

**Note:** Because of budget constraints, travel expenses to Washington, DC for out-of-town winners will **not** be paid or reimbursed.

**AASA Categories****A Civil Rights Leadership Award**

**Description:** An award granted annually to both of the following:

- FSA employees at any organizational level
- FSA supervisors.

Both categories of this award recognize individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives.

AD-2096's will be considered for the following 2 categories:

- supervisory
- nonsupervisory.

**Criteria:** Outstanding accomplishment 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 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.

**AASA Categories (Continued)****A Civil Rights Leadership Award (Continued)**

- planning or supporting special interest programs and activities, which would enrich cultural understanding of diverse groups by attending and encouraging participation of employees

**Note:** This demonstrates intolerance of inappropriate comments or presentations in the workplace.

- demonstrates a marked improvement/increase in FSA programs, services, and benefits provided to women and/or minorities.

**B Excellence in Leadership and Management Award**

**Description:** An award granted annually to FSA supervisors and managers at the GS/GM-15 level **and below** at all organizational levels, whose accomplishments and performance are judged as the most outstanding, and who demonstrate the greatest combination of skills in leading people and managing activities through interactive team building, while valuing diversity.

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

- engages FSA employees to transform FSA into a model agency; demonstrates effective skills in motivating and leading employees and in human resource management, including recruitment, selection, promotion, details, and special assignments, to fully use the skills of all employees on an impartial basis

**Note:** Engaging employees to transform FSA into a high-performing, inclusive agency that benefits from leadership at all levels.

- optimizes FSA “Green” or Sustainable Operations; establishing an integrated strategy to work towards sustainability and to achieve reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- provides civil rights services to FSA employees and customers; furthers the goals of FSA and program area EEO plans, implements an active Civil Rights/EEO Program within the work unit, and demonstrates concern for the career development of staff, as well as the pursuit of individual career goals

**AASA Categories (Continued)****B Excellence in Leadership and Management Award (Continued)**

- maintains effective financial controls to allow FSA to optimize the use of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding in the creation of jobs and economic opportunities across the country; leverages FSA agency management to increase performance, efficiency and alignment
- increases access to FSA programs and services; coordinates and measures the performance of strategic outreach efforts to ensure that all Americans have equal and fair access to key FSA programs and services
- optimizes information technology (IT) policy and applications; improve the effective delivery of programs and services to customers by leveraging the IT resources of FSA
- enhances FSA Homeland Security and emergency preparedness to protect FSA employees and the public
- enhances FSA's human resources process to recruit and hire skilled, diverse individuals to meet the program needs of FSA.

**C 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.

**Criteria:** Outstanding accomplishment 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)****D Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award**

**Description:** An award granted annually to a specific FSA employee or FSA work unit, for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives.

**Criteria:** Outstanding accomplishment 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 1 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 working with local populations to teach them how to restore their watersheds.

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

**Description:** An award granted annually to an FSA employee or team who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

**Criteria:** Outstanding accomplishment 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.

**F Award for Support Service**

**Description:** An award granted annually to recognize employees who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, and program technicians, 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.

**Criteria:** Outstanding accomplishment 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.

**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**

- Nominations will be accepted via email only. Please ensure that the email trail (Electronic Approval) has final approval from the Deputy Administrator before submitting.
- Ensure the validity of all nomination accomplishments.
- Screen nominations for equal employment opportunity violations and disciplinary actions.
- Once submitted, AASA Nomination Form recipients will be screened at the HRD level.
- Send this form and any attachments (Microsoft Word) via email as follows:  
  
**To:** Catherine.Baker@wdc.usda.gov  
  
**Subject:** 2011 FSA AASA Nominations
- Note: SED's shall send this form and any attachments via e-mail to Cindy.Foister@wdc.usda.gov.
- 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, please contact Catherine Baker, HRD at 202-401-0687.

AD-2096 (07-11-11)

Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

This form is available electronically.

<p><b>AD-2096</b> (07-11-11)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b> Farm Service Agency</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS FOR SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE (AASA) NOMINATION FORM</b></p>	<p>1. Date Prepared:</p>
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<b>PART A – GENERAL INFORMATION (Complete for all nominations)</b>	
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 (2-10) (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 year. For explanations on the award categories, please see applicable PM Notice or other guidelines.

- Civil Rights Leadership Award
- Excellence in Leadership and Management Award
- Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award
- Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award
- Heroism and Emergency Response Award
- Award for Support Service

7. Suggested Citation (25 words or less)
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<b>PART B – COMPLETE FOR INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS ONLY</b>				
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)	

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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



Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

AD-2096 (07-11-11)

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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 or non-measurable benefits.

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 additional **Microsoft Word** sheets if needed.



Example of AD-2096 (Continued)

AD-2096 (07-11-11)

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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 (Area Code)	6. Fax Number (Area Code)
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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
2A. Signature of Reviewing Official	2B. Title	2C. Date
3A. Signature of Recommending Official	3B. Title	3C. Date

## 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.