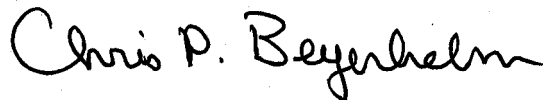


For: FSA State and County Employees

Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship Program (FSASCFP)

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship Program (FSASCFP) is an innovative and comprehensive program that provides mentoring and career development opportunities to State and county employees. The program is a series of unique work experiences that will provide participants with an opportunity to contribute to the organization’s success while receiving an unparalleled learning experience. It is designed to help participants develop a broad base of knowledge about FSA as well as allow them to gain exposure and experience with a variety of functional roles through projects developed by each participating deputy area. The Fellowship Program will operate depending on the deputy area selected.

B Purpose

This notice

- provides guidelines for:
 - program instruction
 - basic eligibility
 - selection criteria
- obsoletes Notice PM-2962.

C Contact

For questions regarding this notice, contact Shannon Logan by either of the following:

- e-mail to **shannon.logan@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0165.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2017	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Program Instruction

A Abstract

Each year a number of participants will be selected and offered a 60 day work experience in Washington, D.C. or Kansas City, Missouri. The 60 day program can be broken up into smaller time commitments subject to approval of the selecting official. The participants will work with deputy area divisions on special projects tailored to the division's area of expertise. During their time, participants will work directly with senior executives who can contribute to their career development and help them build technical skills through hands-on experiences. The program consists of two types of rotational programs:

- agriculture rotation programs – projects and assignments related to DAFP, DAFLP, and DACO
- business rotation programs – projects and assignments related to DAFO and Human Resources Division.

Note: See Exhibit 1 for descriptions of the fellowship opportunities.

B Basic Eligibility

Applicants must:

- be an FSA employee in a State or County Office
- have been a permanent employee with FSA for 5 or more years prior
- have supervisor and SED approval
- have received a superior or above performance rating for the last 2 years
- have or be eligible to apply for a Government-issued travel credit card.

C Selection Criteria

Selections will be made by panels from each deputy area based on:

- a letter of recommendation from a supervisor or senior level official
- an applicant essay outlining his/her desire to participate in the program
- copies of the last two personnel evaluations he/she received proving a superior rating
- demonstrated broad base competencies.

Example: Customer service, oral and written communication, problem solving, and strategic thinking.

Note: Selected candidates will be notified by e-mail on Friday, March 17, 2017.

D How to Apply

All potential candidates should apply by following the procedure in Exhibit 2 by Friday, February 24, 2017.

Notice PM-2982

3 Travel and Lodging Authorizations

A Travel Authorization

Participants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, as soon as possible, using the most efficient means of transportation. This notice does **not** constitute an approved travel authorization.

Each employee **must** have a CONCUR electronic travel authorization before incurring travel expenses. Once in the authorization, enter the following fields at the “General” tab:

- type code - single trip
- purpose - training
- document detail - State and county fellowship program.

Note: M&IE may also be charged to the traveler’s personal credit card for reimbursement through the post-travel vouchering process.

Travelers whose circumstances may require using a **cash advance** may notify a member of the travel staff before initiating a travel authorization. A traveler may request an advance of up to 80 percent of estimated travel expenses (excluding airfare).

For questions about using CBA or a cash advance, contact either of the following in the Debt Management and Travel Policy Office:

- Arthur Holmes by e-mail to arthur.holmes@wdc.usda.gov
- Cynthia Chesley by e-mail to cynthia.chesley@wdc.usda.gov.

B Travel Codes

Travel codes will be provided to selected participants in their notification package. State (GS) and County (CO) Office employees shall code all travel expenses associated with this trip to the Washington-directed travel accounting codes. Travel Codes will be provided upon selection.

C Lodging and Per Diem

Participants will be provided lodging and per diem rate during their entire rotational program. Further details will be provided to the employee at the time of final selections.

D Travel Home

Participants will be allowed one trip home during their Fellowship Program that will be reimbursable through the program.

4 Additional Training Information

A Reasonable Accommodations

Selected participants may notify the airline and hotel directly if special accommodations are necessary.

If special accommodations are necessary to participate in the internship, notify Marvin Jones by February 24, 2017, by either of the following.

- e-mail to **marvin.jones@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0432.

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities

Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs (DAFP)

Fellowship Opportunity #1 (Agriculture Rotation Program)

Farm Program Delivery – Do you want to learn more about the implementation of farm programs at the National Office? Do you want a better understanding of the daily happenings or how program policy is developed and written, or even how all the pieces of the farm bill fit together (including the National Office “secret”)? Sound intriguing? Then DAFP has an opportunity for you! Come be our fellow. We will pair *your* skill set and interests with *our* needs for an exciting experience to serve at the national level.

Why be our fellow? This opportunity could help you develop stronger analytical and communication skills, network with National Office employees, and experience all that farm programs has to offer. You would work closely with your assigned program area to perform a wide array of program activities and responsibilities. It would allow you to gain a new perspective that you can use moving forward in your career at FSA. Whether it is at the local County or State Office, it would be a tremendous experience to have input and be part of making farm programs work.

What would I be doing? As a DAFP Fellow, you would have an opportunity to work with the area of our Agency that is responsible for delivering disaster, conservation, income, price support, and risk management programs. More than 2 dozen programs are administered across three different divisional areas: Conservation and Environmental Programs, Price Support, and Production, Emergency, and Compliance Divisions. Policy and regulations are developed by each division that guide our State and County Offices in FSA program implementation. As a Fellow, you would have an opportunity to participate in the process of developing the regulatory policy used by employees to implement farm programs. In addition, you could also provide valuable input in the design and maintenance of software development, another area of responsibility for DAFP.

How will my skill set be used in DAFP? We will work with the Fellow to match their skill set and interests with DAFP’s needs. The diversity of responsibilities is broad, but assignments would depend on the Fellow’s interests and skill. It could include working in a specific program area, being included in the decision making process, helping develop and test software, or even update a handbook. Still not enough? How about knowing that you will have a major impact on the delivery of farm programs and servicing to American farmers and ranchers. Your perspective as a field employee will play a pivotal role in providing a voice that will develop the BEST policies, procedures, and software applications for key farm bill programs. What better way to meet the needs of field employees than to get involved and come be a Fellow with DAFP. Help us proudly serve FSA’s producers, farmers, and ranchers. Apply today!

This opportunity will allow for the chosen Fellow to work with their Fellowship supervisor to determine what their schedule of participation will be within the June through August timeframe.

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Commodity Operations (DACO)****Fellowship Opportunity #2 (Agriculture Rotation Program)**

DACO Rotational Program - DACO's primary focus includes the administration and management of commodity programs and initiatives. Within our organizational network of divisions and branches, we are woven into FSA's core mission of supporting our Nation's agricultural economy and providing support for international food aid efforts including provisions for domestic activity. Due to a shift in DACO's business environment, operations have been slightly altered as we have moved into a more streamlined cluster reflecting customer expectations as well as establishing tools that ultimately meet the management initiative prescribed by FSA. Currently, DACO houses five divisions:

- Contract Reconciliation Division
- Commodity Operations Division
- Warehouse License and Examination Division
- International Procurement Division
- Business Operations Support Division.

DACO's 60-calendar-day rotational program will take place in our extended headquarter location, Kansas City, Missouri.

Skills Acquired

DACO's Fellow will have the opportunity to acquire skills in the following:

- leadership
- innovativeness
- clear understanding of the Agency's mission, and food aid/procurement.

Desired Outcomes

The selected Fellow will be expected to support DACO on special projects addressing agricultural programs in one or more areas as highlighted below. Aspects of the agriculture rotation program will touch upon business rotational program so it will include projects and assignments related to budget formation/financial operations and information technology. The budget process of managing multiple pools of funding is potentially open for improvement. Within this network, we manage the following key functions:

- manage international distribution food programs

Possible Project: Support efforts to create a more user friendly system for external customers.

- operate price support-programs in forfeiture, for sale, barter or donations rapidly and orderly

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Commodities Operations (DACO) (Continued)****Desired Outcomes (Continued)**

- establish prices for locations throughout the U.S. to develop loan rates, loan deficiency payments, and support market assistance loan repayments

Possible Project: Learn and observe the pricing system with an objective to support a training system for succession planning.

- provide advisory services to FNS, AMS, FAS, USAID, and other government agencies in overall planning for the use of information systems to support commodity operations.

Possible Project: Support efforts to transfer to new software systems supporting both external and internal customers.

- administrative deputy management of budget pools

Possible Projects: Support the budget process of managing our multiple pools, potentially open for improvement through FSA's Managerial Cost Accounting Working Group (concerns: flexibility in program coding, streamlining the coding system, etc).

- the Business Operations Support Branch within DACO is undergoing system upgrades and require support for this IT effort
- acquisition/disposition/management of commodities in support CCC-owned stock (or prevention thereof) pledged as collateral for marketing assistance loans

Note: DACO has procurement authority via CCC procurement and the Federal acquisition regulation procurement. We represent over 25 percent of the Department procurement activity.

- financial review and debt adjudication/reconciliation by and against CCC resulting from transportation (carrier) and warehouse losses for programs administered by FAS and USAID

Possible Project: Learn the adjudication process and design a course for improvement if recognized.

- vessel loading observation
- administer the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program
- administer contracting for storage under the Uniform Grain and Rice Storage Agreement (UGRSA), the Cotton Storage Agreement (CSA), the Peanut Storage Agreement (PSA), and the Processed Commodity Storage Agreement (PCSA)
- administer the U.S. Warehouse Act and regulations.

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Commodities Operations (DACO) (Continued)****Agency Management Initiatives**

The programs administered by DACO are broad scoping and require efficiency, being proactive, and creative use of information technology. A covered approach to learning in a hands-on environment is useful for supporting the ideals held within the management initiatives.

Impact on the Agency/Division

DACO will gain an exchange of expertise applied from qualified Fellows. DACO's primary focus includes the administration and management of commodity programs and price support initiatives so there continues to be a need for innovative leadership. Within our organizational network of divisions and branches, we directly impact Goal 3 of the FSA mission, and our leadership constantly strives to improve upon the goals articulated. International food aid efforts are core to our objectives, and we appreciate interest demonstrated from Fellow applicants.

Note: This opportunity will require the chosen Fellow to fully participate in the 60-calendar-day program during the established June-August timeframe.

Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs (DAFLP)**Fellowship Opportunities #3-4 (Agriculture Rotation Programs)**

Participants are only allowed to choose one option from this deputy Area. The deputy area will fund one option based on the overall interests and skillsets of the applicant pool.

Fellowship Opportunity #3 – Farm Loan Program Delinquency Analysis and Action Plan

This project is located in the office of the DAFLP located in Washington, DC and will entail conducting an in-depth analysis of undeserved borrower delinquencies to ascertain contributing factors in both loan making and loan servicing activities. Once these factors are identified, an action plan will be developed to address any underlying program causes and other issues and improve borrower success. This will include working with all components in Farm Loan Programs headquarters and other FSA headquarters units.

Participating Divisions

FLP Loan Servicing and Property Management Division

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs (DAFLP) (Continued)****Fellowship Opportunity #3 – Farm Loan Program Delinquency Analysis and Action Plan (Continued)****Skills Acquired**

- Ability to analyze data at the county, State, and National levels to identify trends
- Ability to think critically to identify issues and formulate potential solutions to multi-faceted problems
- Use of IT tools to analyze data
- Working across functional areas to address cross-cutting issues

Desired Outcomes

- Provide training and career development opportunities to FSA employees
- Identification of challenges and possible solutions to improve success of underserved borrowers

Agency Management Initiatives

- Supports Agency strategic goals and initiatives within FLP organization unit
- Supports USDA Cultural Transformation

Impact on the Agency/Division

Improves program performance to achieve Agency mission results

Note: This opportunity will require the chosen Fellow to fully participate in the 60-calendar-day program during the established June-August timeframe.

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs (DAFLP) (Continued)****Fellowship Opportunity #4 – Farm Loan Program Strategic Plan Update**

This project will be located in the office of the DAFLP in Washington, DC and entails leading efforts to update the Farm Loan Programs Strategic Plan, including working with all components in Farm Loan Programs headquarters, other FSA headquarters units, and field employee associations. The project includes evaluating, revising, and updating long-term program goals for Farm Loan Programs nationwide.

Participating Division

FLP Loan Making Division

Skills Acquired

A more strategic perspective of FLP mission and activities. This initiative will provide the opportunity to develop skill related to the following OPM competencies:

- team building
- creativity and innovation
- strategic thinking
- problem solving.

Desired Outcomes

- Provide training and career development opportunity
- Updated long-term FLP program performance goals consistent with strategic direction
- Updated and continued linkage between FLP initiatives and priorities and those of FSA

Agency Management Initiatives

- Supports Agency strategic goals and initiatives within FLP organization unit
- Contributes to the achievements of overall Agency initiatives

Impact on the Agency/Division

Improves organization performance to achieve Agency mission results

Note: This opportunity will require the chosen Fellow to fully participate in the 60-calendar-day program during the established June-August timeframe.

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Field Operations (DAFO)****Fellowship Opportunity #5 (Business Rotation Program)**

Outreach – Employee to assist DAFO Outreach Team, establish and implement outreach policies, campaigns, and program activities.

Three Major Goals:

- Assist Outreach planning to host 4H Youth Conference in March/or with COC Stakeholder Meeting in July
- Provide field input on policies to incorporate into outreach handbook amendment
- Opportunity to work with national partners and understand the importance of cooperative agreements and Agency collaborations

DAFO Outreach Office provides program education and stakeholder engagement and is responsible for marketing and promoting the Agency's programs and services to the public. Staff communicates policy and program outreach objectives to employees to effectively promote programs to all customer segments. Staff monitors State and County Office outreach activities and stakeholder relations. Staff is responsible for conducting stakeholder meetings and establishing partnerships beneficial to reach farmers, ranchers, and customers nationwide. The office provides oversight and evaluation to ensure accountability and reporting for outreach and stakeholder relations within each State.

Skills Acquired

- Policy Writing
- Decisiveness
- Strategic Thinking
- Partnering
- Creativity and Innovation
- Technology Management

Desired Outcomes

- Field perspective on improving outreach policies
- Outreach handbook updated
- Exposure to national partners and understanding the value of cooperative agreements
- Importance and benefits of collaboration with other agencies and organizations

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Field Operations (DAFO) (Continued)****Fellowship Opportunity #5 (Business Rotation Program) (Continued)****How it fits Into Agency Management Initiatives**

- Supports workforce investment by providing employee development opportunity that will benefit employee and Agency performance
- Contributes to the improvement and effectiveness of outreach operations
- Supports outreach efforts to increase program awareness

Impact to the Agency/Division

- Assists employee in understanding the role of national policies, partners, and DAFO management through this unique fellowship opportunity
- Assists outreach in rolling out amendments and policies through the eyes of the field staff

This opportunity will allow the chosen Fellow to work with their Fellowship supervisor to determine what their schedule of participation will be within the July 10 through August 4 timeframe.

Deputy Administrator for Management (DAM)**Fellowship Opportunity #6 – FSA Organizational Analytical Dashboards**

The project is to assist in the creation of analytical dashboards that accurately report on the FSA workforce based on organization and demographics.

The participant will work with HRD subject matter experts as well as applicable points of contact across FSA who understand how their workforce and work is organized to accurately map employees and their programs/tasks/work. With this map, HRD will make determinations to group employees by both their organization and the programs they may work on. Once the mapping is complete then the participant will assist in the creation of analytical dashboards using Excel and Adobe Acrobat for publication on both SharePoint and the FSA HRD Intranet.

Participating Divisions

DAM Human Resources Division

Skills Acquired

Analytics, Microsoft Excel, Adobe Acrobat, SharePoint

Descriptions for Deputy Area Fellowship Opportunities (Continued)**Deputy Administrator for Management (DAM) (Continued)****Fellowship Opportunity #6 – FSA Organizational Analytical Dashboards****Desired Outcome**

The completion of first generation analytical dashboards that allow FSA management to engage in data driven decision making as it relates to the various programs and work which FSA is engaged in.

How it fits Into Agency Management Initiatives

Part of the HRD management initiatives is to **provide** FSA management with the analytical tools required to make sound data driven decisions.

Impact to the Agency/Division

- The impact on this project is to add greater diversity of experience to the analytical team tasked with the creation of FSA analytical dashboards.
- This will enable HRD to save some of the time in early states of this project in analyzing and understanding the programs, employees and organizations from a field perspectives.

This opportunity will require the chosen Fellow to fully participate in the 60-calendar-day program during the established June-August timeframe.

Applicant Instructions

Thank you for your interest in the Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship Program (FSASCFP).

Complete the FSA-186 (Exhibit 3) and submit all necessary attachments by e-mail:

TO: Shannon Logan, Human Capital Strategic Initiative and Planning Branch
shannon.logan@wdc.usda.gov

SUBJECT: **FSASCFP APPLICATION**

- Only applications that are filled out completely and signed by the applicant and supervisor with all requested documents will be considered.

- The application packet should include:
 - updated resume
 - applicant's latest SF-50
 - supervisor signature
 - applicant's essay
 - copies of superior or above performance rating for the last two years
 - recommendation form completed by a supervisor or senior level official.

Applicants must:

- be an FSA employee in a State or county office;
- be employed 5 or more years;
- have supervisor and SED approval;
- have received a superior or above performance rating for the last 2 years, and
- have or be eligible to apply for a Government-issued travel credit card.

All application materials must be submitted by **February 24, 2017**.

If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Logan at **Shannon.Logan@wdc.usda.gov** or 202-401-0165.

FSA-186, Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship Program (FSASCFP) Application and Recommendation Form

Note: FSA-186 is available in a fillable format from the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website at <https://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>.

This form is available electronically.

FSA-186 (01-18-17)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency	
FARM SERVICE AGENCY STATE AND COUNTY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (FSASCFP) (Application Form)			
NOTE: This form is used for employees to apply to the Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship (FSASCFP). Supervisor must complete Part C for recommendation on applicant.			
PART A – APPLICANT’S AND SUPERVISOR’S INFORMATION			
1A. Applicant’s Name		1B. Applicant’s Division	
1C. Applicant’s Position, Title and Duty Station		1D. Applicant’s Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i>	1E. Applicant’s Email Address
2A. Supervisor’s Name and Title		2D. Supervisor’s Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i>	2E. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)
2F. SED’s Name		2G. State Office Name	
3. Rotation Choice <i>(Participants may only make one selection from the list below. (See Notice PM-2982, Exhibit 1 for specific program requirements):</i>			
Agriculture Rotation Program Options: <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 1 “Farm Program Delivery” <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 2 “DACO Rotational Program” <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 3 “Farm Loan Program Delinquency Analysis & Action Plan” <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 4 “Farm Loan Program Strategic Plan Update”		Business Rotation Program Options: <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 5 “DAFP Outreach Program” <input type="checkbox"/> Option No. 6 “FSA Organizational Analytical Dashboards”	
4. Applicant’s essay <i>(Enter a brief description outlining your interest in participating in the FSASCFP. The essay should be no longer than two pages, use additional blank pages if needed):</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional sheet(s) attached.			
PART B – REQUIRED SIGNATURES			
Forms which are not signed by the Applicant and Supervisor, or have omitted information will “NOT” be considered. Information provided on the application form will be the only source of information, so it is important that your narrative conveys the basis of your application. Please email completed application and attachments to Shannon Logan at shannon.logan@wdc.usda.gov; for questions please call 202-401-0165.			
5A. Applicant’s Signature		5B. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)	
6A. Supervisor’s Signature		6B. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)	
7A. SED’s Signature	7B. SED’s Name <i>(Print)</i>	7C. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)	
<small>In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.</small>			
<small>Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.</small>			
<small>To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.esc.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of this complaint form, call (866) 632-6992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.</small>			

FSA-186, Farm Service Agency State and County Fellowship Program (FSASCFP) Application and Recommendation Form (Continued)

FSA-186 (01-18-17)		Page 2 of 2
SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION		
PART C – RECOMMENDATION / APPROVAL		
8A. Supervisor's/Senior Manager's Name	8B. Supervisor's/Senior Manager's Email Address	8C. Supervisor's/Senior Manager's Telephone No. (Include Area Code)
8D. Supervisor's/Senior Manager's Signature		8E. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)
9. Applicant's Name and Title (From Page 1, Items 1A and 1C)		
10. Supervisor/Senior Manager Recommendation – Please provide a brief narrative detailing employee's strengths and how the rotation program will be beneficial to them:		