

For: FSA Offices

**Recruitment for Farmers.gov and Other FSA System Modernization Initiatives**

Approved by: Administrator



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

USDA and FSA are undergoing a modernization effort to transform the way FSA delivers services and benefits to customers. The Farmers.gov initiative's objective is to provide farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards with online self-service applications, educational materials, engagement opportunities, and business tools to increase efficiency and productivity while preserving and fostering long-held traditional relationships between local USDA offices and producers.

FSA State and County Office employees are key stakeholders that possess valuable Farm Programs and Farm Loan Programs knowledge and skills necessary to deliver benefits and services to FSA's external customer base - farmers, producers, and ranchers - and are critical to the successful implementation of Farmers.gov and other system modernization initiatives.

To implement other system modernization initiatives, FSA is seeking highly qualified individuals with program and field experience to support the Deputy Administrators for Farm Programs (DAFP) and Farm Loan Programs (DAFLP) with urgent and emergent tasks as well as with implementation of new legislation. Candidates will support DAFP and DAFLP in streamlining business processes, leading the system design and development to support delivering benefits and services, and improving customer service.

**B Purpose**

This notice announces opportunities available to FSA employees in supporting the Farmers.gov and other system modernization initiatives, through temporary assignments/promotions to current FSA GS career/career conditional status employees and to County Office CO permanent employees.

Disposal Date	Distribution
August 1, 2021	All FSA Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

**1 Overview (Continued)**

**B Purpose (Continued)**

The FSA Administrator, DAFO, DAFLP and DAFP are confident that this concept will support the successful implementation of Farmers.gov and other system modernization initiatives. Involving Field Office employees will allow key stakeholders to be part of the modernization initiative from the very start.

**C Contacts**

If there are questions about this notice, contact [lisa.berry@usda.gov](mailto:lisa.berry@usda.gov) or [courtney.dixon@usda.gov](mailto:courtney.dixon@usda.gov).

**2 Farmers.gov and Other Initiatives Opportunities**

**A Agricultural Program Specialist Positions**

FSA is recruiting Agricultural Program Specialists and Agricultural Loan Specialists to support the Farmers.gov and other system modernization initiatives. An estimated 8 full-time positions for temporary assignments/promotions will be filled **immediately** to support Farmers.gov and other initiatives. Positions will be in the GS-1145 and GS-1165 series. Interested applicants will compete for grades GS/CO-9, 11, 12, **and** 13. Selectees at grades 9, 11, or 12 will have promotion potential up to grade 13 **without** further competition while serving in the position. Time in grade requirements must be met.

**Note:** The specific job responsibilities and duties will be listed under “major duties” in the vacancy announcement.

The selectees will be supervised by the applicable Branch Chief or Division Director.

2 **Farmers.gov and Other Initiatives Opportunities (Continued)**

**B Temporary Assignments/Promotions**

The positions will be for a 2-year period, with the option for three 1-year extensions up to a maximum of 5 years. Selectees will be required to sign a minimum 2-year service agreement. While promotions under the vacancy announcement will be temporary promotions, the employees will retain full career/career conditional or permanent status. The employees do **not** give up any of their rights and protections afforded to them in the career/career conditional or permanent status.

CO employees will retain their CO employee status, as CO employee in the Washington, DC area. Payroll and other administrative actions will be handled through a designated FSA County Office.

**C Official Duty Station**

The official duty station will be in the Washington, DC, metro area, or possibly Kansas City, MO, upon FSA Administrator approval. Office space will be located in the South Building in Washington, DC, or Kansas City, MO, Beacon Building.

**D Relocation Expenses/Incentives**

A 1-time relocation incentive bonus of \$10,000 **may** be paid to eligible selectees who are selected from outside the Washington, DC geographic area. Selectees **may** also be eligible for relocation expenses, to include a house hunting trip, shipment and storage of household goods, and temporary quarters subsistence expenses. AD-202R **must** be approved **before** selectees incur any relocation expenses.

**Notes:** Real estate expenses and the relocation services offered through the Relocation Services Program will **not** be offered.

A 2-year service agreement **must** be signed **before** receiving the relocation incentive.

**E Benefits and Returning to Vacated Positions**

Selected employees' entitlement and eligibility for benefits is unaffected, as they will maintain all benefit eligibility during the temporary assignments/promotions.

**Note:** This is **not** a change in type of appointment.

At the end of the temporary assignments/promotions, the selected employees return to the position they vacated, or to a like or similar position within the State from which they were originally employed, at the same grade they vacated.

**2 Farmers.gov and Other Initiatives Opportunities (Continued)**

**E Benefits and Returning to Vacated Positions (Continued)**

Even if employees held a higher grade on a temporary promotion for more than 1 year, the highest previous rate will apply when setting pay and placing them back to their lower-graded position. There is **no** grade retention or pay retention when the employees return to their vacated position, or similar position. See 32-PM for more information.

The office from which the employee is selected will work with their State Office to place the employee back into their office at the end of the temporary assignment/promotion or determine other office location options.

**F Vacancy Announcements for Temporary Job Opportunities**

An email will be sent to all employees when the vacancy announcements are published.

Applicants **must** read carefully and follow **all** instructions on the announcements (that is meet eligibility and qualification requirements, apply online by the closing date, submit all required documents, etc.).