

For: All FSA Employees**2023 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture (AASA)****Approved by:** Administrator**1 Overview****A Background**

FSA plays a critical role in supporting rural economies and their backbone—our nation's farmers, ranchers, and producers. FSA's mission is to equitably serve all farmers, ranchers, producers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective and efficient agricultural programs. Our vision is to keep America's agriculture growing by implementing our core values of ethics, customer service, teamwork, inclusive decision-making, and fiscal responsibility. We are only successful because of the work of our outstanding staff and employees across the nation. For your hard work and diligence in the delivery of FSA and USDA programs, USDA appreciates the opportunity to award that work through the USDA awards program.

The USDA awards program consists of a 3-tier awards system. Tier 1 recognizes employees for their substantial and noteworthy accomplishments at the Agency level. Tier 2 recognizes employee's accomplishments at the Under Secretary level. Tier 3 recognizes employee accomplishments at the Secretary level. Information on Tier 2 and Tier 3 awards will be issued under an FPAC notice at a later time. The FSA AASA is Tier 1 of the 3-tier USDA awards program.

The AASA Program (Tier 1) consists of various individual and team categories based on the Agency's and Department's strategic goals and objectives.

Disposal Date	Distribution
September 1, 2023	All FSA Employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- guidance for AASA
- guidance on the President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA's)
- award timeline for nomination submissions
- screening and approval process.

C Contacts

For specific information about AASA, State and County Office employees may contact their State Office administrative officer. National Office employees may contact their deputy administrator or office director.

For additional general information about AASA, contact AASA Program Coordinator Caleb Gildea by either of the following:

- e-mail to caleb.gildea@usda.gov
- telephone at 202-720-6215.

2 Guidance for AASA

A FSA AASA Awards Program

AASA recognizes significant accomplishments towards FSA and/or USDA's strategic goals and objectives as provided in **Exhibit 1**. All USDA and FSA employees (including STC and COC members, contractors, and retirees) are eligible for the AASA. Team nominations are limited to 25 team members, including the team leader (exceptions to the limit will be considered on a case-by-case basis). The FSA Administrator selects the AASA winners and hosts an award ceremony.

B Categories for AASA Nominations

The Administrator defined specific criteria and parameters for AASA awards and will make award selections that recognize substantial accomplishments and contributions that demonstrate innovation and initiative.

Nominations for AASA should clearly articulate the employee's significant accomplishment/contribution towards FSA's and/or USDA's strategic goals and objectives. This accomplishment/contribution is considered significant when it is completed outside of the employee's documented duties and responsibilities or executed in a manner above and beyond expectation.

2 Guidance for AASA (Continued)

B Categories for AASA Nominations (Continued)

Following are the award categories (see **Exhibit 1** for additional information):

- Non-Supervisor of the Year (Individual)
- Supervisor of the Year (Individual)
- FSA Lifetime Achievement (Individual)
- FSA Newcomer Employee of the Year (Individual)
- Community Service (Individual/Team)
- One FPAC/USDA (Individual/Team)
- Process Improvement (Individual/Team)
- Program Integrity (Individual/Team)
- Fence-Leaner (Individual/Team)
- Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources, and Communities (Individual/Team)
- Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous (Individual/Team)
- Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers (Individual/Team)
- Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities. (Individual/Team).
- Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA (Individual/Team).

3 Guidance for PVSA's

A PVSA Nominations

PVSA will be recognized at the Tier 1 ceremony.

PVSA recognizes those individuals who have achieved a certain standard measured by the number of hours served over a cumulative 12-month period or cumulative hours served over the course of a lifetime. See **Exhibit 2** for further guidance and criteria. All nominations will be submitted using the [FSA AASA Nomination SharePoint](#) (**Exhibit 3**) by **June 6, 2023, 11:59 pm Central Time**.

4 Award Timeline and Nomination Submission

A AASA Timeline

The 2023 AASA covers accomplishments completed during the period – **March 1, 2022-February 28, 2023**.

B Submitting AASA Nominations

All employees are encouraged to nominate co-workers, supervisors, retirees, or teams who have made significant accomplishments/contributions towards FSA's and/or USDA's strategic goals and objectives. A separate nomination package should be submitted for each category you wish to be considered. The **justification** must describe in detail how the extraordinary contribution(s)/accomplishment(s) made a noteworthy impact in achieving the criteria. See award scoring criteria in subparagraph 5 C. The nomination must be reviewed and concurred by the supervisor of the individual nominee or group leader. All nominations will be submitted using the [FSA AASA Nomination SharePoint](#) (**Exhibit 3**) by **June 6, 2023, 11:59 pm Central Time**.

Note: If selected, the **award presentation summary** will appear as the description for the nominee's accomplishments at the award ceremony later this year. This will not be put on the trophy.

In the nomination application, you will find a new option to select a USDA Strategic Goal to apply to the nomination. This is an optional step, with the ability to select one or more. Ensure the goal(s) selected are applicable to the award justification for the nomination. If your nomination is selected to move to a Tier-2, Under Secretary award, this information will be used to support the nomination. See **Exhibit 4** for a complete list of USDA's Strategic Goals and Objectives.

Visit the [FSA AASA Nomination SharePoint](#) to view user guides on submitting a nomination and a description of new features for assistance..

5 AASA Screening and Approval Process

A Approval Authority

The first line supervisor of the individual nominee or team group leader will serve as the nomination's **reviewing official**. The **approving official** for the nominations will be the Deputy Administrators (**for National Office employees**), and SED's (**for County and State Office employees**). When a nomination is submitted, both the reviewing official and approving official will receive an email notifying them that they have an outstanding nomination package on the SharePoint site that needs to be reviewed for approval or disapproval. The reviewing and approving official will review each nomination for completeness and ensure the justification and accomplishments are significant and warrant consideration. The nomination must be acted upon no more than 5 business days from receiving the auto-generated email from a non-monitored shared mailbox account **SM.FPAC.FSA.AdministratorAwards@usda.gov**.

Note: If the reviewing official or approving official disapproves the nomination, the reason for the disapproval must be documented.

B HRD Screening Process

The nomination screening process ensures nominees are suitable for the AASA award. The AASA Program Coordinator will provide HRD, Employee and Labor Relations Branch, and Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division a list of nominees under consideration. All findings will be submitted to the Administrator and those with favorable findings will be eligible for an AASA or PVSA.

C Scoring Committee

The Scoring Committee will consist of a representative from each Deputy Administrator area or their designee. The committee will use the SharePoint site to review all submitted nominations, rate the nominations against the AASA criteria, and make recommendations to the Administrator.

Nominations will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- exceeded category criteria
- program effectiveness
- uniqueness
- illustrated outstanding qualities and capabilities
- scope of effect.

5 AASA Screening and Approval Process (Continued)

D Administrator's Responsibilities

The Administrator selects the 2023 AASA winners and identifies winners for advancement to the Tier 2, Under Secretary level.

E Recognition Award and Ceremony

AASA winners will be recognized with a non-monetary award. Individual winners and 1 representative per team will be authorized to travel to Washington, DC, to attend the AASA National Ceremony and accept the award on behalf of the team.

FSA Administrator Award Recognition Categories

The following tables list the 2023 FSA AASA categories.

Category	Description
Non-Supervisor of the Year	This award recognizes individuals who hold a nonsupervisory position and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
Supervisor of the Year	This award recognizes individuals who hold a supervisory position and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
FSA Lifetime Achievement	This award recognizes individuals who have 30 years or more of service in FSA and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
FSA Newcomer Employee of the Year	This award recognizes individuals who have 5 years or less of service in FSA and have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
Community Service	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who make significant contributions that benefit their local community.
One FPAC/USDA	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who collaborated on significant projects across the FPAC mission area and/or with other Agencies within the USDA.
Process Improvement	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who made significant process improvement recommendations for advancement that were implemented, leading to improvements in the quality and efficiency of services within FSA and across the FPAC mission area.
Program Integrity	This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who made significant advances to improve program compliance and integrity within FSA and across the FPAC mission area.
Fence-Leaner	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who push the boundaries with creative ideas and actions to help move our Agency into a better place.</p> <p>See our Administrator’s description below for details: Some of the best leaders I’ve been around have pushed boundaries. “Outside the box” is a tired metaphor, and better defines where I leave parts that didn’t fit back in after my mechanic work was done.</p> <p>I prefer to think about the lead cow that knew how to push against that old wire just enough to get that fresh bite of grass without breaking it; and the old saddlehorse that could stretch his neck between rickety corral rails to get a bite of grain that maybe was just within his reach without getting himself in a bind. They were always the ones that pointed the herd to the best places to be when bad weather was coming, when switching pastures, or just to find the right breeze on a hot day.</p> <p>So, I like the boundary pushers, because in the end, I think they’re taking us where we should be. With that, we’re announcing the Administrator’s “Fence-Leaner Award” for those that have been creative about getting that next bite without knocking down the fence, and helping the entire herd figure out the best places for us all to go.</p>

FSA Administrator Award Recognition Categories (Continued)

The following tables list the 2023 FSA AASA categories (Continued):

Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who:</p> <p>Objective 1.1: Use Climate-Smart Management and Sound Science to Enhance the Health and Productivity of Agricultural Lands</p> <p>Objective 1.2: Lead Efforts to Adapt to the Consequences of Climate Change in Agriculture and Forestry</p> <p>Objective 1.3: Restore, Protect, and Conserve Watersheds to Ensure Clean, Abundant, and Continuous Provision of Water Resources</p> <p>Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions).</p>
Ensure America's Agricultural Ecosystem System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who:</p> <p>Objective 2.1: Protect Plant and Animal Health by Minimizing Major Diseases, Pests, and Wildlife Conflicts</p> <p>Objective 2.2: Build Resilient Food Systems, Infrastructure, and Supply Chain</p> <p>Objective 2.3: Foster Agricultural Innovation</p>
Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who:</p> <p>Objective 3.1: Foster Sustainable Economic Growth by Promoting Innovation, Building Resilience to Climate Change, and Expanding Renewable Energy</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Expand Markets for Emerging Technologies, Sustainable Products, and Novel Products</p> <p>Objective 3.3: Expand All Producers' Access to Global Markets Through Negotiation and Enforcement of Trade Agreements</p> <p>Objective 3.4: Expand International Marketing Opportunities and Build Demand in Developing Countries Through Delivery of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building</p>
Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who:</p> <p>Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities</p> <p>Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities</p>
Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA	<p>This award recognizes individuals and/or teams who:</p> <p>Objective 6.1: Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability</p> <p>Objective 6.2: Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve</p> <p>Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions</p>

Note: Only USDA strategic goals that directly relate to the FSA mission and vision are included as FSA Administrator awards categories. You may still choose strategic goals to support a package, as mentioned in subparagraph 4 B.

PVSA and Lifetime Achievement**1 Criteria and/or Award Levels**

The AmeriCorps has established a specific number of hours an individual or group must serve with a qualifying organization. You can find the specific number of hours for each award listed below. If you are nominating someone who is 25 years of age or younger, the “young adult” category applies.

A Bronze PVSA

Employees must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- young adults, 100 to 174 hours
- adults, 100 to 249 hours.

B Silver PVSA

Employees must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- young adults, 175 to 249 hours
- adults, 250 to 499 hours.

C Gold PVSA

Employees must have served the following number of hours with a qualifying organization over the 12-month period:

- young adults, 250 hours or more
- adults, 500 hours or more.

D Lifetime Achievement

Employees must have served 4,000 hours or more of service with a qualifying organization over the employee’s lifetime.

2 Certification

All applicants will be required to have the email address of the verifying official, who may or may not be an FSA employee on the PVSA and Lifetime Achievement Award applications. The verifying official will be asked to certify the number of hours for which the employee seeks credit for having served.

AASA Nomination SharePoint Site

1 Accessing AASA/PVSA Nomination SharePoint

Access the nomination SharePoint at [FSA AASA Awards Nomination SharePoint](#).

The following screen will be displayed.

FSA Awards Nomination Instructions

This awards nomination site created by FPAC-BC ISD for FY2023

Submit Your Nominations Here

Individual Nomination

Click on the image below to Submit Your Nomination

Click "Respond to Survey" to fill out the form!



Individual Nomination

Team Nomination

Click on the image below to Submit Your Nomination

Click "Respond to Survey" to fill out the form!



FSA AASA Team Nomination

President's Volunteer Service Award Nomination

Click on the image below to Submit Your Nomination

Click "Respond to Survey" to fill out the form!



President's Volunteer Service Award Nomination

USDA Strategic Goals for Consideration as a Supplement to an Award (optional)

1 Using Strategic Goals to Support a Nomination (optional)

Select from following goals if you think one or more apply to the nomination justification you have written. On the SharePoint awards application, you may select from these six goals if the justification includes details that correspond to a goal or objective below.

Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities	Objective 1.1: Use Climate-Smart Management and Sound Science to Enhance the Health and Productivity of Agricultural Lands Objective 1.2: Lead Efforts to Adapt to the Consequences of Climate Change in Agriculture and Forestry Objective 1.3: Restore, Protect, and Conserve Watersheds to Ensure Clean, Abundant, and Continuous Provision of Water Resources Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions).
Goal 2: Ensure America's Agricultural Ecosystem System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous	Objective 2.1: Protect Plant and Animal Health by Minimizing Major Diseases, Pests, and Wildlife Conflicts Objective 2.2: Build Resilient Food Systems, Infrastructure, and Supply Chain Objective 2.3: Foster Agricultural Innovation
Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers	Objective 3.1: Foster Sustainable Economic Growth by Promoting Innovation, Building Resilience to Climate Change, and Expanding Renewable Energy Objective 3.2: Expand Markets for Emerging Technologies, Sustainable Products, and Novel Products Objective 3.3: Expand All Producers' Access to Global Markets Through Negotiation and Enforcement of Trade Agreements Objective 3.4: Expand International Marketing Opportunities and Build Demand in Developing Countries Through Delivery of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food	Objective 4.1: Increase Food Security Through Assistance and Access to Nutritious and Affordable Food Objective 4.2: Encourage Healthier Dietary Choices through Data-Driven, Flexible, Customer-Driven Approaches Objective 4.3: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health
Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities	Objective 5.1: Improve Rural and Tribal Community Infrastructure, Including Affordable E-Connectivity, Cornerstone Community Facilities, Sustainable and Reliable Power, and Clean and Safe Water and Sewer Systems Objective 5.2: Boost the Financial Security of Rural and Tribal Communities Through Access to Affordable Housing Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural, Tribal, and Historically Underserved Communities
Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA	Objective 6.1: Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability Objective 6.2: Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions