

For: FSA Employees

2025 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture (AASA)

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

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 accomplishments at the Under Secretary level. Tier 3 recognizes employee accomplishments at the Secretary level. A future FPAC notice will provide information on Tier 2 and Tier 3 awards.

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

FSA is successful because of the work of outstanding staff and employees. USDA appreciates the opportunity to award employees' hard work and diligence through the awards program.

B Purpose

This notice provides guidance on AASA nomination and selection

Disposal Date	Distribution
June 1, 2026	All FSA Employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

1 Overview (Continued)

C Contacts

For specific information about AASA:

- State and County Offices will contact their State Office administrative officer
- National Office employees will contact their deputy administrator or office director.

For additional general information about AASA, contact AASA Program Coordinator Caleb Gildea by e-mail to caleb.gildea@usda.gov.

2 AASA Guidance

A AASA Awards Program

AASA recognizes significant accomplishments towards FSA and USDA strategic goals and objectives as provided in Exhibit 1. All USDA and FSA employees, STC and COC members, contractors, and retirees are eligible for AASA.

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

B AASA Nomination Categories

AASA nominations should clearly articulate the employee or team's significant **outstanding** accomplishment or contribution to FSA and USDA strategic goals and objectives.

Accomplishments and contributions are considered significant when completed outside of employees' documented duties and responsibilities or executed in a manner above and beyond expectation.

Team nominations are limited to 25 team members, including the team leader.

Note: Exceptions to the limit will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2 AASA Guidance (Continued)

B AASA Nomination Categories (Continued)

Following are the AASA award categories:

- individual:
 - Non-Supervisor of the Year
 - Supervisor of the Year
 - FSA Lifetime Achievement
 - FSA Newcomer Employee of the Year
- individual/team:
 - Community Service
 - One FPAC/USDA
 - Process Improvement
 - Program Integrity.

Note: Exhibit 1 contains additional award category information.

C AASA Award Timeline

The 2025 AASA covers accomplishments completed during the period **March 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.**

2 AASA Guidance (Continued)

D Submitting AASA Nominations

Nominations must be submitted using the [FSA AASA Nomination SharePoint](#) (Exhibit 3) by **August 15, 2025, 11:59 pm CT**.

Employees are encouraged to nominate co-workers, supervisors, retirees, or teams who have made significant accomplishments and contributions to FSA and USDA strategic goals and objectives.

Nomination packages must:

- be submitted for each unique individual or team
- include a justification that describes in detail how the extraordinary contributions or accomplishments made a noteworthy impact in achieving the criteria, **beyond the employee or team's standard duties or responsibilities**

Note: Exhibit 3 provides an example nomination package. Subparagraph 3 C provides award scoring criteria.

- be reviewed and approved by the supervisor of the individual nominee or group leader
- be unique and not duplicative across nominations or categories (such as copying and pasting a nomination for the same person or team across multiple categories).

Note: If selected, the **award presentation summary** will be read as the description for the nominee's accomplishments at the award ceremony later this year.

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

3 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:

- Deputy Administrators for National Office employees
- SED's (or acting SED's) for County and State Office employees.

When a nomination is submitted, both the reviewing official and approving official will:

- receive an e-mail notification to review and approve or disapprove a nomination package on SharePoint
- review each nomination for completeness and ensure the justification and accomplishments are **significant, outstanding**, and warrant consideration
- approve or disapprove the nomination no more than 5 business days after receiving the auto-generated e-mail from **SM.FPAC.FSA.AdministratorAwards@usda.gov**
- document the reason for disapproval.

B HRD AASA Screening Process

The AASA Program Coordinator will provide HRD, Employee and Labor Relations Branch, and Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division a list of nominees. HRD will ensure nominees are suitable for the AASA award and submit eligible nominees to the Administrator.

C AASA Scoring Committee

The Scoring Committee consists of a representative from each Deputy Administrator area. The committee will use the SharePoint site to:

- review all submitted nominations
- rate the nominations against the AASA scoring criteria
- make recommendations to the Administrator.

3 AASA Screening and Approval Process (Continued)

C AASA Scoring Committee (Continued)

Nominations will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

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

D Administrator Responsibilities

The Administrator selects the 2025 AASA winners and identifies winners for advancement to Tier 2, if applicable.

E AASA Recognition Award and Ceremony

AASA winners will be recognized with a non-monetary award. Details of the awards ceremony will be announced at a later date.

2025 FSA AASA Recognition Categories

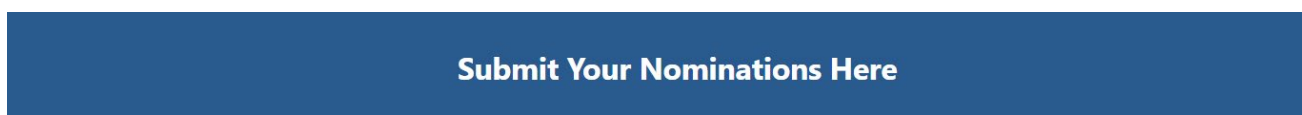
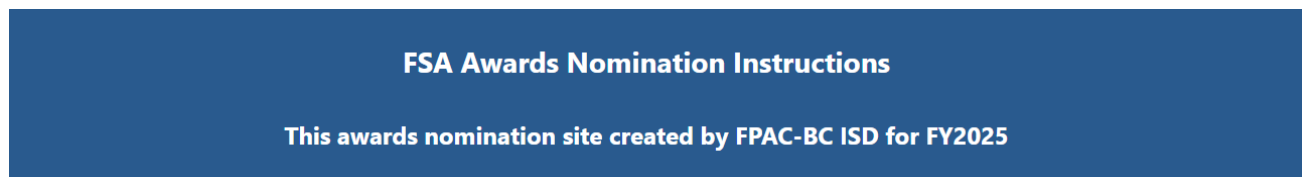
The following table displays the 2025 FSA AASA recognition categories.

Category	Description
Non-Supervisor of the Year	Recognizes individuals who: • hold a non-supervisory position • have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
Supervisor of the Year	Recognizes individuals who: • hold a supervisory position • have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
FSA Lifetime Achievement	Recognizes individuals who: • have 30 years or more of service in FSA • have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA Note: This award may only be awarded to an individual once.
FSA Newcomer Employee of the Year	Recognizes individuals who: • have 5 years or less of service in FSA • have demonstrated and contributed to the improvement of the quality and service of FSA.
Community Service	Recognizes individuals and/or teams who make significant contributions that benefit their local community.
One FPAC/USDA	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	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	Recognizes individuals and/or teams who made significant advances to improve program compliance and integrity within FSA and across the FPAC mission area.

AASA Nomination SharePoint

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

The following screen will be displayed.



Individual Nomination

Click on the image below to Submit Your Nomination



FSA AASA Individual Nomination

Team Nomination

Click on the image below to Submit Your Nomination



FSA AASA Team Nomination

Awards Justification and Description Example

Category: Lifetime Achievement Award

Award Presentation Summary: In recognition of a career with Indiana FSA dedicated to customer service and employee development.

Justification for Nomination: Indiana FSA was fortunate when Jane Farmer's path led her to Indiana FSA. After growing up in Nebraska, she pursued her higher education, worked for a farm supply retailer and eventually pursued an opportunity to apply for and be hired as a County Operations Trainee (COT) in March of 1992. After a brief time as County Executive Director (CED) in Brown County, Indiana, Jane transferred to Green County FSA and has served as CED for the past 30 years. She and her husband have a small farm where she pursues her love of horses and agriculture in a community she has come to call home.

Statement from Retiring District Director Jack Farmer: Jane is a natural at training, nurturing, and encouraging staff to pursue career goals. In the past decade, she has had a former PT advance to program chief in the state office, one advance to a CED, and another to a Farm Loan Officer. In her time with FSA, Jane has developed a leadership skillset that sets an example for others. She has a conscientious work ethic that drives her to succeed and has earned the respect of coworkers across the state of Indiana. She encourages personal development and has successfully created another strong team whose PTs are looked up to as leaders in program delivery and customer service.

Statement from CED June Apple: Jane is an individual who always rises to the task at hand. Green County has a pristine reputation for always ensuring things are done the correct way and that all starts with Jane. Not only has she made a lasting impact in her home county, but Jane goes above and beyond her responsibilities as a CED. She has trained numerous CEDTs over the years contributing to FSA's future leadership. I was lucky enough to be one of those CEDTs. The experience I gained training under someone with Jane's caliber has had a lasting impact on my FSA career.

She has also served as acting CED in multiple counties over the years and is currently acting DD for District 4. Jane has had a tremendous impact on many people and producers during her 32-year career with FSA. Her dedication is something every employee should strive for. In addition to her work inside the FSA office, Jane enjoys outreach opportunities, especially those involving youth in the community. She can often be found at local field days, working with Purdue Extension, and other stakeholders to advance delivery of FSA programs and to promote agriculture in the local community. A special passion of Jane's is representing FSA at local career nights where she shares FSA's story with students and parents. Jane served as COT coordinator during the COVID pandemic and was recently asked to be part of the "GROW Indiana" professional development program for staff. She currently serves as Acting District Director in addition to Green County CED.