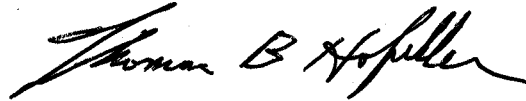


For: FSA Federal and County Employees

2008 Aspiring Leader Program (ALP)

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Program Announcement

HRD, Training and Development Branch (TDB) is accepting nominations for the FY 2008 ALP sponsored by the Graduate School, USDA. ALP:

- is a competency-based leadership development program designed to develop employees into more effective leaders through a series of developmental experiences
- uses an integrated approach to leadership development through assessment, experiential learning, and individual development opportunities
- is announced for GS and CO employees at the GS-5 through GS-7 levels or equivalent.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- information about the nomination and selection processes for ALP
- a description of ALP (Exhibit 1).

Note: To complete ALP, participants will be required to attend three 1-week residential seminars and a 1-week shadowing assignment, and may include a 30-calendar-day developmental assignment within FSA, outside of their position of record. Participants **must finish all** program components within **3 months**. No exceptions will be made. Additional work time will be needed to complete some activities and to meet other requirements that must be accomplished. **Carefully consider these time requirements with your first-line supervisor before submitting a nomination package.**

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact Tanya Coram-Howard, HRD, TDB, ALP Program Coordinator at 202-205-3782.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2008	All FSA Federal and County employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice PM-2645

2 Nomination Process

A Nominee Qualifications

Nominees for ALP must:

- be full-time, permanent Federal or county employees
- be at the GS-5 through GS-7 level or equivalent level
- demonstrate leadership potential.

B Nomination Procedure

Eligible employees may apply for ALP by submitting a nomination package containing the following:

- completed AD-2021 (Exhibit 2), including supervisory signature (**mandatory**)
- completed Graduate School, USDA Application (Exhibit 3)

Notes: Union officials on 100 percent official time do **not** need supervisory concurrence and signature.

AD-2021 is available from the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website at <http://intra3.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>.

- a written statement, 1 page minimum, addressing how the following abilities or competencies are supported in their current position:
 - leadership
 - initiative
 - interpersonal communication (people skills)
 - oral communication
 - written communication
 - technical competence
- Note:** Each ability or competency should be addressed separately. The applicant's written statement **must** be signed by their first-line supervisor.
- current OF-612, SF-171, **or** resume signed and dated by the applicant with current home address
 - list of all formal training courses taken in the last 5 years

Note: Do **not** submit a completed SF-182 until the nominee is notified of selection for ALP.

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2 Nomination Process (Continued)

B Nomination Procedure (Continued)

- a business case, 1 page minimum, written and signed by the first-line supervisor or the appropriate FSA official:
 - stating how ALP will benefit the employee and FSA
 - assessing the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.

Note: Only employees who follow FSA's nomination procedures in this notice will be considered for selection to participate in ALP. **Do not apply directly to the Graduate School, USDA.** FedEx all nomination packages to Tanya Coram-Howard (subparagraph C).

C Where to Send Nomination Package

Application packages must include the original and 3 copies of the completed nomination package. Because of major mail delays, applicants must submit their application package by either of the following options:

- Fed-Ex or UPS to:

Tanya Coram-Howard
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
1280 Maryland Ave SW
4th Floor, Suite 490
Washington, DC 20024
Telephone: 202-205-3782

- USDA Courier Service or hand deliver to:

Tanya Coram-Howard
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
Portals Building, 4th Floor, Suite 490
1280 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20024.

Note: FAXed copies of nomination packages will **not** be accepted.

D Deadline

All nominations must be **received** in HRD, TDB by **COB June 6, 2008**. Nominations received after this date will **not** be considered. Substitution of nomination items will **not** be permitted after the deadline.

Notice PM-2645

3 Selection Process

A Participants

FSA may support up to 30 nominees.

B Participant Selection

An HRD, TDB specialist will assemble an Assessment Panel consisting of at least 2 members who occupy positions at a grade level not lower than the full performance level of the Long-Term Training Program (LTTP) being filled. There will be an EEO (nonvoting) observer present and there may be a union (nonvoting) representative observing during this process.

C Panel Membership

The Assessment Panel:

- will review and rank employee nominations using criteria established Agencywide for LTTP's
- has the final responsibility for determining best qualified candidates based on valid LTTP-related criteria and employee's application package.

Note: The Assessment Panel refers best-qualified candidates to the Administrator or designee for approval for the allotted number of spaces approved. **No panel will be held if the number of nominations received does not exceed the number of slots available.**

D USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

FSA provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. The decision on granting reasonable accommodations will be on a case-by-case basis.

The work of candidates while on official time, performing labor relations representational functions, must be viewed with neutrality.

3 Selection Process (Continued)

E Labor-Management Obligation

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

F Program Costs

Tuition for the 2008 ALP is \$2,565 per participant.

Notes: Tuition, travel, lodging costs, and per diem for FSA Federal and County Office employees shall be coded to their originating office. Offices may request travel reimbursement up to \$10,000 from BUD once travel expenses have been incurred. FSA Federal and County Offices will be responsible for funding any additional travel costs over \$10,000 within their travel budgets. Submit requests to BUD with a copy to DAFO.

Travel and a minimum of 3 trips (various locations) are required.

Upon notification that a County Office employee has been selected, SF-182's should have an appropriation/fund in block 21 for County Offices using a 14-digit line of accounting, such as "787SSCCC010000". See 98-FI, Exhibit 13 for County Office organization codes.

G Reasonable Accommodation

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this training should contact Tanya Coram-Howard at 202-205-3782.

Note: Some accommodation services, such as a sign language interpreter, require at least 3 days notice to schedule.

H Selection Notification

HRD, TDB will notify employees whose names are forwarded to the Graduate School, USDA for consideration. The Graduate School, USDA will send selectees written notification of their acceptance.

Description of 2008 ALP

PROGRAM DESIGN

The Aspiring Leader Program is a 3-month program open to women and men at the GS-5 through GS-7 levels.

The program is tailored to each participant's developmental needs, focusing on the Graduate School's, USDA Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI), for leadership/managerial skills and personality assessment. In addition to LEI, other program components include the following:

- **leadership development team activity and presentation**
- **developmental work assignments**
- **management interviews**
- **management readings**
- **management book reviews.**

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The Aspiring Leader Program is structured around three 5-day seminars held in various locations. During seminars, participants attend a different seminar each day with topics reflecting core leadership competencies. In addition to the core classroom curriculum, individual developmental assignments will need to be completed outside of the participant's normal work hours. Classroom learning and individual assignments allow participants to tailor the program to specifically meet their developmental needs.

Orientation and Skill Building

Participants will begin with a 1-week orientation session to establish a working relationship between other participants and program staff. Held in Washington, DC., this session will outline program requirements, policies, expectations, and opportunities.

Teams at Work

This session takes place approximately 3 weeks after the initial session and concentrates on team performance, conflict management, decision making, problem solving, interpersonal skills, customer service, diversity and cultural awareness in the workplace, flexibility, and presentation skills.

Team Presentations, Closeout, and Graduation

In this session, emphasis is placed on oral communication, self-direction, and leadership skills. Teams deliver presentations. Participants, supervisors, managers, program coordinators, team advisors, and mentors attend a graduation ceremony and luncheon.

Description of 2008 ALP (Continued)**PROGRAM COMPONENTS****Individual Needs Assessments**

Before attending the orientation session, participants will complete LEI to assess their level of strengths and developmental needs and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to facilitate team-building exercises.

Leadership Development Plan

Each participant will design a Personalized Leadership Development Action Plan (PDAP), which will act as a blueprint and road map throughout the course of the program. This plan will be tailored to his or her individual needs and consist of customized developmental objectives and experiences that will assist the participant's growth and use the program's integrated approach to leadership development. PDAP should include all program requirements and other continual learning activities.

Learning Team Activities

During the orientation session, participants will be assigned to Leadership Development Teams. Each team will explore a program-related issue and make a one-hour team presentation of this issue during the final week of the program. This activity is designed to strengthen leadership and interpersonal skills, stimulate commitment to personal development, value and increase the understanding of diversity and to provide a forum to explore current issues facing leaders in the Federal workplace.

Shadowing Assignment

In addition to the 3 residential sessions, the program includes a shadowing assignment of a Federal manager at the GS-11 through GS-13 levels. The participant will observe a manager in action, focusing on their management style and how they interact with their employees.

Management Interviews

Participants will interview a minimum of 3 federal managers at the GS-11 through GS-13 levels. These interviews will provide an additional opportunity for you to have visibility at the management level and gain critical information for long-term career planning and development.

Description of 2008 ALP (Continued)**PROGRAM COMPONENTS (Continued)****Management Readings**

In order to broaden knowledge of the management field and strengthen analytical skills, participants will read and write a review of 2 books on management issues.

Close-Out Week Activities

During the final week of ALP, teams will deliver presentations.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Orientation: August 25, 2008

Core I : September 29, 2008

Graduation: October 27, 2008

AD-2021, 2008 Aspiring Leader Program for FSA Employees Nomination Form

Following is an example of AD-2021.

<p>This form is available electronically.</p>		
<p>AD-2021 (05-07-08)</p>	<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency</p>	
<p>2008 ASPIRING LEADER PROGRAM FOR FSA EMPLOYEES</p> <p>NOMINATION FORM</p> <p>Note: Deadline <u>June 6, 2008</u></p>		
<p>Important Notice. Tuition, travel, lodging costs and per diem will be funded by the employee's office budget.</p>		
<p>PART A – GENERAL INFORMATION</p>		
<p>1. If completed by field office, employees should enter name of State and County of Applicant:</p>		
<p>STATE: _____ COUNTY: _____</p>		
<p>2. Applicant's Name and Home Address <i>(Include ZIP Code)</i></p>	<p>4. Division/Staff <i>(Include Office Address and ZIP Code)</i></p>	<p>5. Room No. and STOP Code</p>
<p>3. Home Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i></p>	<p>6. Work Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i></p>	<p>7. Work FAX No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i></p>
<p>8. Title of Present Position</p>	<p>9. Grade <i>(GS or CO and Grade)</i></p>	<p>10. Are you a Career Employee?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>11. Supervisory signature is required before submitting your name for consideration for this training. Supervisor shall sign to indicate that they have reviewed your nomination package.</p> <p>NOTE: Union officials on 100% official time do not need supervisory concurrence and signature.</p>		
<p>11A. Supervisor Print Name</p>	<p>11B. Supervisor's Signature</p>	<p>11C. Date <i>(MM-DD-YYYY)</i></p>
<p>11D. State Executive Director Print Name <i>(Required for all FSA State and County Federal and Non-Federal Employees)</i></p>	<p>11E. State Executive Director's Signature</p>	<p>11F. Date <i>(MM-DD-YYYY)</i></p>
<p><small>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</small></p>		

AD-2021, 2008 Aspiring Leader Program for FSA Employees Nomination Form (Continued)

AD-2021 (05-07-08) Page 2 of 2

PART B - INSTRUCTIONS

12. Required information to be included with this nomination form:

A. Provide a written statement 1 page minimum addressing how the following abilities or competencies are supported in your current position (*Note: When providing the written statements, address the following abilities or competencies individually*):

- Leadership
- Initiative
- Interpersonal Communication (People Skills)
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Technical Competence

Your written statement must be signed by your first line supervisor.

B. (*PART C*) A business case 1 page minimum written and signed by your first line supervisor or the appropriate Agency official stating how the program will benefit the employee and their agency. The business case should also assess the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.

C. Current OF-612 or resume signed and dated by the applicant with current home address.

D. List of all formal training courses taken in the last 5 years.

Please submit this nomination form and information listed in Items 9A through 9E including the original and three (3) copies. All completed nomination packages must be received in the Training and Development Branch by **COB June 6, 2008**.

PART C - BUSINESS CASE

The business case must be 1 page minimum written and signed by the applicant's first line supervisor or the appropriate Agency official stating how the program will benefit the employee and their agency. The business case should also assess the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.

Statements for the Business Case are as follows:

1. How will this program benefit the applicant?
2. How will the applicant's completion of this program benefit your office?
3. How will the applicant's completion of this program benefit the agency?

13A. Supervisor Print Name

13B. Supervisor's Signature

13C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)

14. Please send the original and three (3) copies of the completed nomination package using either of the methods listed below:

If sending by Regular U.S. Mail, send to:

Tanya Coram-Howard
 USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
 STOP 0574
 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
 Washington, DC 20250-0574

If sending by USDA Courier Service, FED-EX, UPS or, Hand Deliver to:

Tanya Coram-Howard
 USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB
 1280 Maryland Ave, SW 4th Floor Suite 490
 Washington, DC 20024

OR

NOTE: FAXED COPIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

USDA Graduate School ALP Application

The following is an example of the USDA Graduate School ALP application.

Aspiring Leader Program Application
(To Be Completed by the Applicant)

Name : _____

Home Address (Kept confidential upon request):

Work Address:

Work Phone: _____ Work Fax: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Title: _____ Series: _____ Grade: _____

Education: HS BA/BS AA Masters

Years of Government Service: _____

Immediate Supervisor's
Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____ Telephone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Supervisor's Mailing Address:

Agency Program Coordinator:
Tanya Coram-Howard
Telephone Number: 202-205-3782 Fax Number: 202-205-9048
E-mail: Tanya.Coram-Howard@usda.gov
Agency Program Coordinator Address:
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
STOP 0574
Washington, DC 20250-0574

USDA Graduate School ALP Application (Continued)

Purpose for Applying
(To Be Completed by the Applicant)

Part A: Please state your purpose for applying. How your participation in the **Aspiring Leader Program** supports your career goals.

Evaluation of Performance
(To Be Completed by the Supervisor)

Narrative Evaluation of the Applicant's Performance: Please provide a written narrative of the applicant's current performance.

Supervisor's
Signature _____

Supervisor's Title and Telephone Number: _____

*All application materials must be submitted to the Graduate School, USDA through the appropriate agency channels and must be accompanied by an SF-612, 171 or resume and an approved agency training form such as an SF-182, 1556 or 350. Letters of recommendation will also be accepted