

For: FSA Federal Employees

**2009 Executive Potential Program (EPP)**

Approved by: Acting Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



**1 Overview**

**A Program Announcement**

HRD, Training and Development Branch (TDB) is accepting nominations for the FY 2009 EPP sponsored by Graduate School, USDA. EPP is a yearlong competency-based leadership program designed to develop senior-level public service employees into more effective leaders. EPP is based on OPM’s **Executive Core Qualifications** and the Graduate School, USDA’s Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI).

**B Program Curriculum**

EPP provides participants with opportunities to:

- build skills in team building, negotiation, conflict resolution, leadership, and empowerment
- complete and receive feedback from managerial assessment instruments
- complete developmental shadowing work assignments
- design an Individual Development Plan
- gain exposure and visibility at the highest FSA leadership levels
- obtain critical knowledge for long term career planning.

**C EPP Description**

Exhibit 1 describes EPP.

**Note:** Participants are expected to be away from their current positions for a minimum of 6 months over the course of EPP.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
March 1, 2009	All FSA Federal employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice PM-2690

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### D Program Dates

The dates for EPP are:

- orientation week: **March 29 through April 3, 2009**
- Core I: **July 19 through 24, 2009**
- Core II: **November 15 through 20, 2009**
- Graduation: **March 21 through 26, 2010.**

#### E Program Requirements

Participants **must** complete **all** of the following EPP requirements:

- 360-Degree Feedback Assessment LEI
- 4 one-week residential sessions
- 5 senior executive interviews and one 3-workday shadowing assignment of a high level official
- benchmarking

**Note:** EPP candidates are expected to complete a minimum of two 60-calendar day developmental assignments.

- benchmarking to identify outstanding leadership practices in public service, business, industry, and academia
- developmental work assignments
- experimental learning teams/projects
- Leadership Development Plan
- senior executive interviews and shadowing assignments
- senior executive mentoring.

#### F Contact

For additional details or information about EPP or questions about this notice, contact Brian Marincic, FFAS/EPP Coordinator, HRD, TDB by either of the following:

- e-mail at **brian.marincic@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0353.

## Notice PM-2690

### 2 Nomination Process

#### A Nominee Qualifications

Nominees for EPP **must**:

- be full-time, permanent Federal employees
- be at the GS-13 through GS-15 level (or equivalent)
- demonstrate significant managerial or executive potential.

#### B Applying for EPP

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

- completed AD-2005 (Exhibit 2), including supervisory signature (**mandatory**)
- Graduate School, USDA EPP Application (Exhibit 3)
- current OF-612 signed and dated by the applicant with current home address
- business case, 1 page minimum, written and signed by the first-line supervisor or the appropriate FSA official stating how EPP will benefit the employee and FSA

**Note:** The business case should also assess the applicant's potential and need for this training and development experience.

- list of all formal training courses taken in the last 5 years
- written statement, 1 page minimum, addressing how the following abilities or competencies are supported in employees current position:
  - initiative
  - interpersonal communication (people skills)
  - leadership
  - oral communication
  - technical competence
  - written communication.

**Note:** When providing written statements, address **each** ability or competency **individually**. Written statements **must** be signed by employee's first line supervisor.

## Notice PM-2690

### 2 Nomination Process (Continued)

#### C Submitting Nomination Packages

Because of major USPS mail delays, send the **original and 3 copies** of the completed nomination package using FedEx to the following address:

BRIAN MARINCIC  
USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB  
1280 MARYLAND AVE SW  
4TH FLOOR SUITE 490  
WASHINGTON DC 20024  
Telephone: 202-401-0353.

**Note:** FAXed copies will **not** be accepted.

#### D Deadline

All nomination packages **must** be received in HRD, TDB by **January 12, 2009**. Nomination packages received after January 12, 2009, will **not** be considered. Substitution of nomination package items will **not** be permitted after the deadline.

**Note:** Only employees who follow FSA's nomination procedures in this notice will be considered for selection to participate in EPP. Do **not** apply directly to the Graduate School, USDA.

### 3 Selection Process

#### A Participant Slots

FSA **may** support up to **2 nominees** for EPP.

#### B Participant Selection

Participants will be selected by HRD, TDB specialist who 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.

## Notice PM-2690

### 3 Selection Process (Continued)

#### C Assessment Panel Membership

The Assessment Panel:

- will review and rank employee nominations using criteria established FSA-wide 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 FSA Administrator, or designee, for approval for the 2 slots available. **No panel will be held if only 2 nominations are received.**

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, SW, 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 accommodation 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.

#### D Labor-Management Obligation

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

## Notice PM-2690

### 3 Selection Process (Continued)

#### E Program Cost

Tuition for the FY 2009 EPP is \$5,945 per participant. Items **not** included in the \$5,945 include travel, meals, or lodging costs. They are the responsibility of FSA.

**Note:** Tuition, travel, lodging costs, and per diem for GS employees shall be coded to the originating office. Upon notification that candidates have been selected, the originating office may request an increase in their travel allotment up to \$10,000 per participant. Submit a budget allotment charge request to the budget analyst to request an increase in the office's travel allotment. All offices will be responsible for funding any additional travel costs over \$10,000 within their travel budgets.

#### F Selection Notification

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

#### G Accommodations

By COB, **January 12, 2009**, persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend and/or participate in EPP should contact Brian Marincic, FFAS/EPP Coordinator, HRD, TDB by either of the following:

- e-mail to [brian.marincic@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:brian.marincic@wdc.usda.gov)
- telephone at 202-401-0353.

## Description of EPP

The Executive Potential Program is a yearlong competency-based leadership program designed to develop senior-level public service employees into more effective leaders. The Program is based on the Office of Personnel Management's **Executive Core Qualifications** (ECQ's) and the Graduate School, USDA's Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI).

Participants engage in classroom discussions, group exercises, learning teams and independent studies. The curriculum is based on experiential learning and supported by classroom instruction. The individual components include:

- 360-Degree Feedback Assessment Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI)
- Leadership Development Plan
- Action Learning Teams/Projects
- Senior Executive Mentor
- Four One-Week Residential Sessions
- Developmental Work Assignments
- Senior Executive Interviews and Shadowing Assignments
- Benchmarking.

### **The Leadership Effectiveness Inventory**

The Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI) is a systematic assessment tool designed to measure competency and determine developmental needs for organizations and individuals in public service. The LEI assesses individual proficiency levels in over 100 specific leadership tasks and activities against the 28 competencies that comprise the Leadership Effectiveness Framework. The participant, his/her supervisor and five peers complete the LEI to eliminate perceptual biases inherent in most assessment tools. The participant is then able to develop an effective leadership development plan based on objective data.

### **Action Learning Teams/Projects**

During orientation, participants are assigned to an Action Learning Team. Each team will obtain sponsorship from a senior level manager and act as consultants, developing solutions to an existing organizational issue. Upon project completion each team gives a report and presentation to the Graduate School and the sponsor. Action Learning Projects strengthen leadership and interpersonal skills, and encourage participants to become more self-directed, action-oriented and visionary. They also provide a forum for exploring issues facing federal leaders and for practicing leadership techniques.

**Description of EPP (Continued)****Residential Sessions**

Participants attend four intensive one-week residential sessions. The orientation session focuses on individual developmental needs, team building, leadership skills, experiential learning, project identification and project planning. Program requirements, policies, expectations and opportunities are also outlined. The remaining three residential sessions will concentrate on the following ECQs:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Managing for Results
- Building Coalitions/Communication.

Expert instructors from the federal and academic community facilitate workshops and course sessions where participants learn effective techniques and methods for exercising essential leadership competencies related to the ECQ's. Formal and informal discussions continue into the evening. Residential sessions are held outside of the Washington, D.C. area.

**Developmental Assignments**

Participants must complete two 60-day developmental assignments away from their current position. During these assignments, participants learn to adapt and successfully lead in a new position and culture by utilizing the techniques and methods presented at residential sessions. In addition, each participant must conduct five senior executive interviews and complete a three-day assignment shadowing a high-level official. These assignments provide exposure and visibility at the highest levels of agency leadership as well as critical knowledge for long-term career planning.

**Benchmarking**

The Executive Potential Program uses benchmarking processes to identify outstanding leadership practices in public service, business, industry and academia.

Participants will have an opportunity to visit federal, state and local governments, major corporations, universities and nonprofit organizations and dialogue with "best practice" leaders. Through benchmarking, Executive Potential Program participants become skilled at using dialogue to gain insight beyond their individual understanding, an essential skill for leaders responsible for strategic planning.

**Program Time Requirements**

Participants are expected to be away from current positions for a minimum of six months over the course of the program. Participants may schedule developmental activities to minimize disruptions of their normal workflow.

AD-2005

The following is an example AD-2005.

This form is available electronically.

**AD-2005**  
(12-18-08)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farm Service Agency

**2009 EXECUTIVE POTENTIAL PROGRAM FOR FSA FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**

**NOMINATION FORM**

**Note: Deadline January 12, 2009**

**Important Notice: Supervisors shall contact the FSA Budget Division to insure that funding is available to support the nominee. If funding is not available do not submit the nominee for consideration to participate in this program. Travel/lodging costs will be funded by the employee's office travel budget.**

**PART A – GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. If completed by field office, employees should enter name of State and County of Applicant:

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Applicant's Name and Home Address (Include ZIP Code)	4. Division/Staff (Include Office Address and ZIP Code)	5. Room No. and STOP Code
3. Home Telephone No. (Include Area Code)	6. Work Telephone No. (Include Area Code)	7. Work FAX No. (Include Area Code)
8. Title of Present Position	9. Grade (GS)	10. Are you a Career Employee? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

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.

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

11A. Supervisor Print Name	11B. Supervisor's Signature	11C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
11D. State Executive Director Print Name (Required for all FSA State and County Federal and Non-Federal Employees)	11E. State Executive Director's Signature	11F. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)

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.

AD-2005 (Continued)

AD-2005 (12-18-08) Page 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 Part B through Part C including the original and three (3) copies. All completed nomination packages must be received in the Training and Development Branch by **COB January 12, 2009**.

**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:**

**Brian Marincic**  
 USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB  
 STOP 0574  
 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
 Washington, DC 20250-0574

OR

**If sending by Special Delivery, hand carry or FEDEX, send to:**

**Brian Marincic**  
 USDA, FSA, HRD, TDB  
 1280 Maryland Ave, SW 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Suite 490  
 Washington, DC 20024

**NOTE: FAXED COPIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED.**

**Graduate School, USDA EPP Application**

The following is an example Graduate School, USDA EPP Application.

			
<p><b>Executive Potential Program Application</b> (To Be Completed by the Applicant)</p>			
Name			
Home Address <i>(Kept confidential upon request)</i>			
Work Address			
Work Phone	Work Fax	Home Phone	
E-mail			
Title	Series	Grade	
Social Security Number	Education	<input type="checkbox"/> HS	<input type="checkbox"/> AA <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> Masters
Years of Government Service			
Immediate Supervisor's Name			
Supervisor's Title	Telephone Number		
E-mail			
Supervisor's Mailing Address			
Agency Program Coordinator :			
Telephone Number	Fax Number		
E-mail			
Agency Program Coordinator Address:			

Graduate School, USDA EPP Application (Continued)

**Purpose for Applying**  
(To Be Completed by the Applicant)

Part A: Please state your purpose for applying. How will your participation in the Executive Potential Program support your career goals?

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**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.

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**Supervisor's Signature** | \_\_\_\_\_

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**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.