

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
2016-2017 Superior Service Awards  
Nominations due September 10, 2016**

<b><u>Award Categories</u></b>	<b><u>Number Awarded*</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b> (Except for Distinguished Career, all awards recognize major efforts, particularly in outcome programming or organizational initiatives, from which significant impacts occurred during the last <b>2 to 5 years</b> . See guidelines.)
County Extension Agent	up to 6	For persons who serve one or more counties in any agent capacity (IPM, EFNEP, etc.) for AgriLife Extension.
Extension Specialist or Program Director	1 or 2	For department- or unit-affiliated persons holding professorial rank and/or titled Extension specialist or program director.
Program Specialist, Manager or Coordinator	1 or 2	For department- or unit-affiliated persons titled program specialist, program manager, or program coordinator.
Team (Preferably, a core group of six or fewer AgriLife Extension personnel responsible for the nominated effort. Strong substantiation of team member roles required for larger teams.)	up to 6	For any combination of AgriLife Extension and non-Extension personnel (including CEP, research, teaching and private sector personnel). Each member must have made a significant contribution to a major joint effort from which significant educational, service, or organizational impacts occurred during the last 2 to 5 years. The number of non-Extension team members should not exceed the number of AgriLife Extension team members.
Unit	1	For any organizational unit within Extension, or subset of an Extension unit, that has designated faculty and staff, a single supervisor, and specialized function. See guidelines.
Volunteerism	1	For all Extension faculty and staff, an individual or a team. Team eligibility is the same as in the team category.
Diversity	1	For all Extension faculty and staff, an individual or a team. Team eligibility is the same as in the team category.
Office Support ❖ State/District ❖ County	2 2	For persons either employed or assigned to support Extension offices (regardless of source of funds). Includes staff and administrative assistants, secretaries, office managers, clerks, and related positions.
Program Support	1	For Extension associates, Extension assistants, education assistants, technicians, and others in non-clerical positions (BLT, farm demonstration, etc.), at any level, not covered by other categories.
Agency Leadership	1	For DEAs, RPLs, CEDs, DHs, ADHs, program leaders and unit heads, and state administrators.
Distinguished Career	2	Individuals in any personnel category (except from the Office of the Director) with 20 or more years of consistent exemplary service as an AgriLife Extension employee.

\*May be adjusted at director's discretion based on factors such as merit and the ratio of awards to the number of employees in each personnel category.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
**Guidelines: 2016-2017 Superior Service Awards Program**

**Purpose:** To recognize Extension faculty and staff members who provide outstanding performance in Extension education or to the organization. Consideration for awards is made without regard to non-merit factors.

**Nomination Procedure**

To simplify processing, part of the nomination consists of an [online application](#), which is also linked to the webpage at <http://extensionemployees.tamu.edu/tasks/>. *The remainder of the nomination must be submitted as a single Adobe PDF attachment via e-mail to [ExtensionNotices@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ExtensionNotices@ag.tamu.edu), as instructed below.* General questions about this awards program may be directed to [Suzanne Deatherage](#) or her assistant, [Loretta Morse](#). Please direct technical questions about the online application to [Katy Gottwald](#).

Contents of PDF Attachment

- 1) **Nomination narrative**, up to three pages. Begin with *name of award category* and *name and title of nominee*; continue with a *detailed basis for nomination* (description of accomplishments and impacts). Do NOT include a cover letter, title page, or vita. There is no official form or format to use; however, please use a type size no smaller than 12-point. Do NOT enclose photographs, news articles, or other printed materials developed by the nominee(s).

Nominators may collaborate with the nominee, the nominee's supervisor, and others as desired. **Emphasize impacts, particularly in outcome programming or organizational initiatives over the past two to five years**, except in the distinguished career category. See "Additional Guidelines."

- 2) **TWO commendations**, preferably no more than one page each. The best sources are clientele, partners, and stakeholders outside Extension, as well as AgriLife personnel outside the nominee's line of supervision (except for the office support category). Extension administrators may not provide commendations for this awards program. *As a courtesy to those who are contacted, please seek commendations quickly to allow a considerate period of time for reply.*

NOTE: You may seek new commendations or you may use any supportive letter received since the last nomination deadline on September 10, 2015 (e.g., appreciation letters or commendations for other awards). No format is prescribed; a salutation and the name of the award sought are not required, but **the letter should clearly indicate the date, author, and author's affiliation/ contact information**. See a sample solicitation letter at the end of these guidelines.

Submission of PDF Attachment

Save the complete nomination document (narrative plus commendations) as a PDF and give it a file name that begins with the nominee's surname (last name). Send via e-mail to [ExtensionNotices@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ExtensionNotices@ag.tamu.edu) and write "SSA Nomination/name of category" as the subject; for example, "SSA Nomination/Volunteerism" or "SSA Nomination/Team."

**The online application must be completed and the e-mailed PDF must be received no later than midnight, Mountain Time, September 10, 2016.**

## Contents of Online Application

[Click here](http://extensionemployees.tamu.edu/tasks/) for the application or go to the link at <http://extensionemployees.tamu.edu/tasks/>. The online application will ask for the following information:

1. Type of award category (individual, unit or team) and name of award category.
2. Nominee information
  - For individuals—nominee’s name, title, e-mail address, and county or unit/dept. affiliation
  - For teams—name of team; name, title, e-mail address, and county or unit/dept. affiliation of each team member.
  - For unit—name of unit; unit’s headquarters location; name, title, and e-mail address of unit leader
3. Nominator information: name and e-mail address of a **single** contact, to serve as sole recipient of notices about this nomination. (Nominees will be notified only if selected for an award.)
4. Nominee’s biographical information:
  - total years of employment with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
  - percent current Extension appointment
  - years in current position

## **Eligibility**

A nominee for an individual award must be a full-time Texas A&M AgriLife employee who has held at least a 50 percent Extension appointment or assignment (percent of effort) for two years, as of July 10, 2016—except agency leadership nominees, who must hold at least a 33 percent Extension appointment or assignment (percent of effort).

- AgriLife Extension members of nominated teams must have held at least a 33 percent Extension appointment or assignment for two years, as of July 10, 2016. Each member must be a significant contributor to the team effort; membership may include support staff. Persons outside AgriLife Extension may be cited in the team nomination, but an award stipend is contingent on availability of funds. The number of non-Extension team members may not exceed the number of Extension members.
- Neither an employee receiving an individual award nor a group receiving a team or unit award is eligible to receive another award in the same category for three years. However, an employee receiving an award as part of a team may receive another team award within the next three years if at least 50 percent of the team members are different.
- A nominee in the distinguished career category must have at least 20 years of service with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, as of July 10, 2016, and must have performed at a consistently outstanding level during his or her full career. Provide highlights of program and organizational impacts and leadership in the nomination narrative.
- An individual may be nominated as an individual in only one award category, but also may be nominated as a member of a team. A team may be nominated for only one team award (including the Diversity and Volunteerism categories).
- An individual must have served for at least two years, as of July 10, 2016, in the position that corresponds to the appropriate award category; i.e. served as a specialist for two years to be eligible in the specialist award category.

## Additional Guidelines

The Extension Honor Awards Committee evaluates nominations and makes recommendations to the agency director. Each award-winning individual and team member will receive a monetary prize and attractive framed certificate. For the unit category, the award consists of a single framed certificate and single cash prize. The time and place of award presentations will be announced at a later date.

- Only an employee within Texas A&M AgriLife may submit Superior Service Award nominations.
- Nominations should focus on the last two to five years of service (except, at least 20 years for distinguished career). All nominations should reflect major accomplishments and impacts, especially those which address a critical need and rise above the expected standard of regular programming or organizational support.
- Nominations in the team category should focus on a specific project or program, with particular emphasis on a critical need met by a core group, usually up to six AgriLife Extension personnel. (Strong substantiation of team member roles is required for larger teams.) A defined goal should be evident. Each team member must have made a major contribution (describe) and must have been an active member of the team for at least six months prior to July 10, 2016. A nomination should not be just a compilation of individuals' separate work. Team nominations of individuals from different units/disciplines are encouraged. Each Extension member of the team must meet the eligibility criteria above.
- The unit category applies to a faculty/staff group under the same supervision, whose members work jointly to administer ongoing Extension programs and services. These include departmental and non-departmental units, county and district offices, subsets of these groups, and special program units such as BLT, EFNEP, FarmAssist, and military programs, etc.
- Units may self-nominate for this award. There is no restriction on the number and eligibility of people represented by the nomination, as long as they work under the same direct supervisor. The nomination should describe the unit's functions and goals and the coordination and teamwork employed to carry these out. The nomination should address how well the unit serves its clientele and upholds the Extension mission, including how well it administers, evaluates, and interprets its programs and services; how well it communicates within Extension and with clientele and partners; and how well the unit manages/enhances its resources; with emphasis on quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. Provide a brief profile about the unit members (e.g., number, range in length of Extension employment, special awards).
- Nominations in the diversity category may cite an individual or team for efforts to promote diversity and pluralism, to reach diverse audiences through innovative programming, and to foster a spirit of multiculturalism in the workplace and in Extension educational programs. As with all nominations, emphasis should be on accomplishments/impacts. The Cooperative Extension System defines diversity and pluralism as follows:

Diversity is the presence of differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice and other human differences. Pluralism is an organizational culture that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork, and productivity among people who are diverse in the above dimensions.

- Nominations in the volunteerism category may cite an individual or team for efforts that exemplify excellence in volunteer management by displaying programmatic success and impact through the utilization of volunteers. This can be demonstrated by revealing how the individual has successfully built and sustained a volunteer program and provided direction to volunteer groups leading to community, regional, or statewide impact.

#### Suggestions for Strengthening Nominations

- Describe what was done that deserves recognition. How is it distinguished from the expected standard of regular programming or organizational support? Did the effort achieve impressive results and impacts?
- Use data to support statements about results and outcomes. Describe evaluation/measurement methodology and include pre- and post-comparisons if possible.
- Explain how the nominee engaged clientele, stakeholders, partners, or fellow employees, as appropriate to the effort. How did this strengthen the effort and broaden its impact?
- Was the work done with less than usual supervision, help, or resources? What obstacles were overcome? Were new techniques or procedures developed?
- What special qualities or capabilities make the nominee outstanding? What kind of peer relationship is evident?
- Do commendation letters reflect the significant impacts/value of the nominee's accomplishments? (Quotes, with attribution, from letters other than those attached to the nomination narrative may be included in the text of the narrative.)
- Use a writing style that is clear, concise, and free of errors. Avoid passive voice and excessive use of words such as "outstanding" and "excellent" without documentation.
- Organize in logical sections, using appropriate headings and subheadings. Use bullet statements where possible.
- Briefly define specific programs, including acronyms, that might be unfamiliar to the reviewers.

### **Criteria for Assessing a Nomination**

#### I. Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments

##### Development and Implementation of the Program/Effort – 50 Points

- Documents a response to identified clientele or organizational needs, which has produced positive outcomes over the past two to five years.
- Describes chosen methodology, appropriate to the award category and objectives of the effort.
- Demonstrates collaboration, leadership, and commitment to the mission and organizational excellence of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

- Shows excellence in job performance; e.g., innovations; effective use of resources, overcoming obstacles/degree of difficulty.

#### Results of the Program/Effort – 30 Points

- Includes evidence of impacts and outcomes, such as comparative or other supporting data.
- Indicates efforts to report and interpret results to stakeholders and/or professional peers.

#### II. Commendations (two) – 15 Points

- Contain specific references to the nominee’s efforts (e.g., the programming effort of an educator or the organizational effort of a support staff member).
- Attest to the direct impacts of the nominee’s efforts.
- Are clearly identified with a **date after September 10, 2015**, author’s name, and author’s affiliation/contact information.

#### III. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

### **Sample Text: Request for Commendation**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing to ask your help with an award nomination of (name of nominee) for his/her performance and impact as a (nominee’s position) in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Each year, our agency recognizes outstanding Extension faculty and staff for superior service. (Nominee) is very worthy of this honor and it is my pleasure to nominate him/her.

If you are willing and able to respond by (date, 2016), I would appreciate receiving a one-page commendation from you about (nominee’s) work.

Your statement will be most effective if it includes a reference to specific programs or endeavors in which you worked with (nominee), their impact, and how these efforts made a difference. Overall, our nomination will focus on...(specific program or issue on which the nominee has worked).

There is no prescribed format for your statement. Please do not include a salutation to me; simply title your statement as “Commendation.” If you have questions or need assistance, you are welcome to contact me. Again, please send your commendation so that I will receive it no later than (date). Send or deliver to...

Thank you very much for your consideration. I hope you will join me in seeking this well-deserved recognition for (nominee).