

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
2021-2022 Superior Service Awards
Nominations due October 22, 2021**

<u>Award Categories</u>	<u>Number Awarded*</u> up to	<u>Description</u> (Except for Distinguished Career, all awards recognize major efforts, particularly in outcome programming or organizational initiatives, from which significant impacts occurred during the last 2-5 years . See guidelines.)
County Extension Agent ❖ Early Career ❖ Mid-Career ❖	6 (Divided between categories based on nominations)	For persons who serve one or more counties in any agent capacity (IPM, EFNEP, etc.) for AgriLife Extension. For individuals with 7 years of agency service or less (Early Career); 7-15 years of agency service (Mid-Career)
Extension Specialist or Program Director ❖ Early Career ❖ Mid-Career ❖	2 (Divided between categories based on nomination)	For department- or unit-affiliated persons holding professorial rank and/or titled Extension specialist or program director. For individuals with 7 years of agency service or less (Early Career); 7-15 years of agency service (Mid-Career)
Program Specialist, Manager or Coordinator	2	For department- or unit-affiliated persons titled program specialist, program manager, or program coordinator.
Team (a core group of AgriLife Extension personnel responsible for the nominated effort. Strong substantiation of team member roles required for larger teams.)	4	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 2-5 years. The number of non-Extension team members should not exceed the number of AgriLife Extension team members.
Emerging Needs Team	2	Same as above except this team will have to show particular emphasis on a critical need met by a core group. There is no requirement on multi-year impacts.
Volunteerism	1	For all Extension faculty and staff, an individual or a team. Team eligibility is the same as in the team category. (See more information on page 4)
Diversity	1	For all Extension faculty and staff, an individual or a team. Team eligibility is the same as in the team category. (See description on page 4)

Administrative Support ❖ State/District ❖ County ❖ Early Career ❖ Mid-Career ❖	2 2 (Divided between categories based on nomination)	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. For individuals with 7 years of agency service or less (Early Career); 7-15 years of agency service (Mid-Career)
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 ❖ Middle Management ❖ Specialist ❖ Agent ❖ Administrative Support	4	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.

*The ratio of awards to the number of employees in each personnel category has been used to determine the number of awards given in each category. The Honors Awards Committee will make recommendations on how many are awarded in each category based on the scores with final discretion given by the Agency Director.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Guidelines: 2021-2022 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

The nomination packet consists of an application form, a nomination narrative and two commendation letters. The packet should be submitted (in that order) as a single Adobe PDF attachment by end of business **October 22, 2021**, via e-mail to extension@ag.tamu.edu.

Contents of PDF Attachment

- 1) **Nomination form**, providing contact information for both the person making the nomination and the nominee (or members of team).
- 2) **Nomination narrative**, up to three pages.
 - Begin with *name of award category* and *name and title of nominee*.
 - Then provide a brief description (one paragraph of the person or program that can be used in the script at the awards banquet if selected).
 - 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 2-5 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 administrative support category). The Extension director and associate directors may not provide commendations for this awards program except for the administrative support category). *As a courtesy to those you contact, please seek commendations quickly and allow a considerate period for reply.* You may seek new commendations, or you may use any supportive letter received since the last nomination deadline of October 16, 2020 (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 with contact information**. See a sample solicitation letter at the end of these guidelines.

Submission of PDF Attachment

Save the complete nomination package (form, narrative, and commendations) as a single PDF and give it a file name that begins with the nominee's last name or, for a team, a key word from the team's name. Send via e-mail to extension@ag.tamu.edu and write "SSA /name of category/name of nominee" as the subject; for example, "SSA /Volunteerism /Jones" or "SSA/Team/Diabetes."

Eligibility

A nominee for an individual award must be a full-time Texas A&M AgriLife employee or Extension appointment (50% percent of effort) for two years, as of September 1, 2021.

- AgriLife Extension members of nominated team(s) must have held an Extension appointment for two years as of September 1, 2021 (except if they are part of the Emerging Needs team nomination where there are no multi-year requirements). 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 award is eligible to receive another award in the same category for two years. However, an employee receiving an award as part of a team may receive another team award within the next two 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 September 1, 2021, 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 September 1, 2021, 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 framed certificate (\$500 for individual awards and \$2000 to be split amongst Extension employees of a team). The time and place of award presentations will be announced later.

- Only an employee within Texas A&M AgriLife may submit Superior Service Award nominations.
- Nominations should focus on the last 2-5 years of service, excluding Distinguished Career and Emerging Needs team nominations. 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, usually up to six AgriLife Extension personnel. Strong substantiation of team member roles is required for larger teams. 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 September 1, 2021. 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.
 - Nominations in the emerging needs team category will have to show **particular emphasis** on a critical need met by a core group and meet all the other requirements mentioned above.
- 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?
- 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, which might be unfamiliar to the reviewers.

Criteria for Assessing CEA, Extension Specialist or Program Director, Team, Volunteerism, Program Specialist or Diversity Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. 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.

- II. 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.

- III. 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 October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

Criteria for Assessing Emerging Needs Team Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. Development and Implementation of the Program/Effort – 50 Points
 - Documents a response to identified clientele or organizational needs, which has produced positive outcomes.
 - 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.

- II. 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.

- III. 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 October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

Criteria for Assessing Administrative Support Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. Development and Implementation of the Administrative Effort – 50 Points
 - Demonstrates administrative daily support, e.g., office support/management, event or project coordination, budget coordination/management/billing, record keeping or human resource/payroll activities.
 - Demonstrates administrative work on additional projects outside daily support, e.g., workshop, conference, field day(s), 4-H event(s), etc.
 - 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.

- II. Results of the Administrative Effort – 30 Points
 - Character – Demonstrates intrinsic qualities that enable positive influence and outcomes, e.g., authenticity, compassion, fairness, generosity, humility, and trustworthiness. Indicates efforts to support the reporting and interpret results to stakeholders and/or professional peers.
 - Collaboration - Builds strong and productive relationships with other colleagues in terms of addressing issues, accomplishing shared goals, creating solutions, demonstrating strong communication skills, and mentorship.

- III. 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 October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

Criteria for Assessing Agency Leadership Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. Development and Implementation of the program/effort – 50 Points
 - Documents a response to identified clientele or organizational needs, which has improved the agency's standing and/or visibility over the past 2 to 5 years.
 - Described 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, and overcoming obstacles/degree of difficulty.

- II. 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 stakeholder and/or professional peers.

- III. Commendations (two) – 15 Points
 - Contain specific references to the nominee's efforts (e.g., the programming effort of an educator or the organizational effort/agency level).
 - Attest to the direct impacts of the nominee's efforts.
 - Are clearly identified with a **date after October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

Criteria for Assessing Program Support Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. Program Coordination, Development & Implementation – 40 Points
 - Documents awareness and active engagement in the assessment of clientele and organizational needs.
 - Describes a high level of participation in all aspects of program development and implementation.
 - Demonstrates effective communication and cooperation with colleagues and clientele within the program development and implementation process.
 - Shows excellence in job performance and commitment to program timelines; energetically pursues innovative resources and solutions to problems or novel educational delivery methods.

- II. Program Results, Impacts & Visibility – 40 Points
 - Includes evidence of significant contribution to program(s) outcomes.
 - Demonstrates leadership in utilizing program outcomes to bring positive visibility to the mission and organizational excellence of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
 - Shows that program(s) outcomes were meaningfully interpreted and communicated to stakeholders and/or professional peers.
 - Describe outcomes of program(s) that had appropriate organizational or external clientele impact.

- III. 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 October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. Completeness, clarity, and presentation of nomination – 5 Points

Criteria for Assessing Distinguished Career Nomination

Nomination narrative about nominee's accomplishments is worth the following:

- I. Development & Implementation of the program effort – 50 Points
 - Documents a response to identified clientele or organizational needs, which has produced positive outcomes over the past 20 or more years.
 - Describes chosen methodology, appropriate to the award category and objectives of the effort.
 - Shows excellence in job performance, e.g., innovations, effective use of resources, and overcoming obstacles/degree of difficulty.

- II. Results of 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.

- III. 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 October 16, 2020**, author's name, and author's affiliation/contact information.

- IV. 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, 2021), I would appreciate receiving a one-page commendation from you about (nominee's) work.

Your statement will be most effective if it refers to specific programs or endeavors in which you worked with (nominee). Please describe their impact—that is, how these efforts benefitted you or others. 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... (your email)

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

Sincerely,
(signature)