

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

55-22

10/11/22

\$1,000 REFERRAL AWARDS

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions for granting referral awards to employees who refer new hires to the Agency who ultimately become FSIS employees. Referral awards are currently authorized for employees who successfully refer new hires for in-plant mission critical occupations: Food Inspectors, Consumer Safety Inspectors, Supervisory Consumer Safety Inspectors and Public Health Veterinarians.

II. ELIGIBILITY AND LIMITATIONS

- A. For referring employees to be eligible for referral awards, applicants are to indicate on the [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) application questionnaire that they were referred by an FSIS employee and enter the employee's name and email address (if known) in the space provided.
- B. In order for an employee to receive a referral award, referred individual is to be hired into an eligible position and:
1. Complete at least 90 days of continuous service with FSIS;
 2. Maintain performance at the Fully Successful level during the 90 days of service; and
 3. Be a newly appointed USDA employee (i.e., an employee on their first appointment with a USDA mission area, agency, or staff office, or an appointment to a USDA mission area, agency, or staff office after a break in service of 90 or more calendar days). The employee may come from another Federal agency outside USDA.
- C. Each individual employee is eligible to receive up to 5 awards this fiscal year.
- D. A referred individual may only name one referring employee.
- E. The referred individual is to meet all requirements for the referral award before the referring employee is eligible to receive the award.
- F. All FSIS employees who meet the definition of "employee" in [5 U.S.C. 2105](https://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/5-usc-2105), Employee (i.e., SES, SL, GS, permanent, temporary, intermittent, and term employees), are eligible for referral awards with the exception of:

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1. Employees whose regular, recurring jobs include recruitment and staffing;
2. Employees who are otherwise excluded from receiving monetary awards;
3. Selecting officials or other persons associated with the selection of the candidate; and
4. Any of the following relatives of the referred individual:
 - a. Spouse or parents, including stepparents thereof;
 - b. Children, including stepchildren and adopted children thereof;
 - c. Siblings, including stepsiblings, and spouses thereof; or
 - d. Any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is equivalent of a family relationship.

III. AWARD AMOUNT

Each individual referral award will be \$1,000.

IV. REFERRING CANDIDATES

- A. All FSIS employees are encouraged to refer potential candidates in person, post fliers in public places where qualified applicants frequent, or other methods.
- B. To avoid potential ethics issues, FSIS employees are to strictly adhere to USDA ethics guidelines if they use their personal social media outlets to re-post FSIS vacancy announcements from USAJOBS.gov. Refer to [USDA's Personal Social Media Ethics](#) for additional information.
- C. All employees are to use sound professional judgment in how recruitment activities are conducted, and obtain proper permissions, based on the situation, before conducting recruiting activities or posting fliers.

V. APPEALS

If an employee does not receive a referral award, the employee may not appeal that decision.

VI. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING

- A. FSIS indicates the availability of a referral award in the vacancy announcement for the applicable position.
- B. The referred individual is to indicate in the job application process that they were referred by an FSIS employee and enter the employee's name in the USAJOBS.gov application questionnaire. When the final job offer letter is extended to the candidate, it will include language by which the candidate will confirm the referring employee.
- C. When a referral is made, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) is to track the referral to ensure the referred individual completes 90 days of continuous employment with FSIS and maintains performance at the Fully Successful level. After 90 days, OHR is to verify that the referred individual has met the criteria and the referring employee is eligible for the referral award. OHR is then to send the District/Program Area a complete [Form AD-287-2](#) to obtain required supervisory signatures. Upon receipt of the signed [Form AD-287-2](#), OHR will process the referral award.

NOTE: Referral awards do not count against the annual achievement award limitations.

D. The supervisor is not to inform the awardee about the award nomination until it is officially approved after the referred individual meets all the criteria. Any person involved in the process is to consider the award documentation privileged information until the award is presented.

VII. INTERNAL CONTROLS AND REPORTING

OHR is to collaborate with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Districts or Program Areas to monitor the use of referral awards and is to ensure that approved actions are taken according to the procedures in this notice. OHR is also to provide referral awards usage reports as requested by USDA and FSIS leadership.

VIII. QUESTIONS

For questions regarding this notice, contact OHR at FSISHR1@usda.gov with the subject "Referral Award" or call 1-877-FSIS-HR1 (1-877-374-7471), option 4.



Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development