

How to Apply for Membership to the Agricultural Advisory Committees for Trade

Committee Membership Information

All committee members are appointed by, and serve at the discretion of, the Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). Committee appointments are typically for a period of approximately four years, but the Secretary and the USTR may renew an appointment for an additional term. To attend most meetings, committee members must have a security clearance at the secret level. New appointees are guided in how to apply for a security clearance and their appointment is contingent on successful completion of the investigation. Committee members serve without compensation and are not reimbursed for their travel expenses. No person may serve on more than one USDA advisory committee at the same time unless a specific exception is granted by the USDA Committee Management Officer. No entity may have more than one representative on any single trade advisory committee.

Membership Requirements

All committee members must be U.S. citizens, must represent a U.S. entity with an interest in agricultural trade, and must not be registered with the U.S. Department of Justice under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Federally registered lobbyists are not permitted. Members should have expertise and knowledge of agricultural trade as it relates to policy and commodity-specific issues. Members present the views and interests of the U.S. entities they represent, which have interests in the subject matter of the committees. Should a member be appointed primarily for his or her expertise, and not solely as a representative of an interest group, he or she shall be designated as a special government employee (SGE). SGEs are subject to ethics laws if they are appointed because of their personal knowledge, background, or expertise. USDA assists SGEs in disclosing their financial interest and provides ethics training on an annual basis. In making appointments, every effort is made to maintain balanced representation on the committees from producers, farm and commodity organizations, processors, traders, and consumers. Geographic balance on each committee is also sought. Appointments are specific to the individual and are not transferrable. ***No person, company, producer, farm organization, trade association, or other entity has a right to membership on a committee.***

Equal Opportunity Statement

Nominations for membership on the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee or one of the six Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees is open to individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical handicap, marital status, or sexual orientation. Equal opportunity practices in accordance with U.S. government policies are followed in all appointments to the committees. To ensure that the recommendations of the committee take into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership shall include, to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

Nomination Procedures

To nominate a person to serve on any of the committees, submit a current resume for the nominee and the following:

- Form AD-755 (Advisory Committee Background Information, O.M.B. No. 0505-0001), available on the Internet at:
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/apac-atacs/advisorycommittees.asp>
- A cover letter indicating: **(a)** the specific committee for which the individual is being nominated, **(b)** why the nominee wants to be a committee member, **(c)** his or her qualifications for membership, and **(d)** how the submitter learned about this call for nominations. **(e)** The cover letter should also include the statements required below related to Federally Registered Lobbyists and foreign firms.

Information for Federally Registered Lobbyists and Entities with Foreign Ownership

Federally Registered Lobbyists: To be considered for advisory committee membership, nominees should submit an affirmative statement that the applicant is not a federally registered lobbyist, and that the applicant understands, if appointed, he or she will not be allowed to continue to serve as an advisory committee member should the applicant become a federally registered lobbyist.

Foreign Ownership: If the nominee represents an entity or corporation with 10 percent or greater non-U.S. ownership, the nominee must state the extent to which the organization or interest represented is owned by non-U.S. citizens, organizations, or interests and demonstrate, at the time of nomination, that this ownership interest does not constitute control and will not adversely affect the nominee's ability to serve as an advisor on the U.S. Agricultural Advisory Committees for Trade.

Where to Send Your Completed Nomination Materials/How to Contact Us

All nomination materials should be mailed in a single, complete package and sent to: Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250, Attn: APAC/ATACs

MORE INFORMATION: Direct inquiries to Bob Spitzer or Steffon Brown in the Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs at telephone (202) 720-6219, fax (202) 720-0340. Send e-mail to Bob.Spitzer@fas.usda.gov or Steffon.Brown@fas.usda.gov. Address mail to the Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 1040, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1040.