

## Employment Opportunity with the Michigan Farm Service Agency

### Loss Adjustment Contractor Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Michigan trains and contracts with Loss Adjustment Contractors (LAC), independent contractors knowledgeable in field and specialty crops, to conduct appraisals on loss claims under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Tree Assistance Program (TAP) across the state.

#### Basic Qualifications

A LAC is required to have some knowledge of field crops and specialty crops. This knowledge may be gained from a college degree in agriculture or a working knowledge of crops from personal experience.

LAC work requires physical activity while inspecting crops, which may include walking through uneven fields, bending over, and heavy lifting. LACs also need fundamental math skills are required for measuring and weighing the crops being appraised.

#### Service Responsibilities

The service work of a LAC includes:

- performing loss adjustment services as assigned by FSA State Office representative or County Executive Director (CED) for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or Tree Assistance Program (TAP). This includes visits for the purpose of appraising damaged or destroyed crops during the growing season or following harvest, for all related loss adjustment functions.
- explaining limited responsibilities and filing procedures to agricultural producers, when applicable
- scheduling work to ensure timely service and returning completed appraisals and producer folders to the assigning FSA office within 10 calendar days of assignment
- promoting a good working relationship between agricultural producers and FSA
- bring controversial claims and other unusual claim situations to the attention of the official who assigned the work, including the knowledge of producer bankruptcy
- accurately completing and timely submitting all claim documents and LA pay no later than the following pay period in which the work was performed
- advising all interested parties that findings from inspections and appraisals are for FSA use.



#### Compensation

LACs are paid by hourly rates based on a combination of certification and length of service.

When training is completed and LACs are considered fully certified, compensation is paid at the fully certified rate effective for the date the services are completed. LACs may be paid an increased rate after one year of fully certified service with FSA as determined by the State Office loss adjustment specialist.

LACs are independent contractors, which means they do not earn paid leave, pensions or other benefits associated with federal employment. However, LACs have flexible work schedules and may be eligible for travel costs, per diem and other duty-related compensation.

Pay Rates	
Certification & Service	Hourly Rate
Phase I and II training in progress, not certified	\$15.00
Fully certified LA with less than one year of qualifying service.	\$20.25
Fully certified with one or more years of qualifying service.	\$22.55

## Administrative Responsibilities

LAC administrative tasks include:

- advising FSA of all insurance or reinsured companies for which loss adjustment work or sales service is performed
- complying with all Federal travel regulations
- legibly and properly completing required documents and submitting them in a timely manner.
- being responsible for any additional expenses incurred for personal preference
- not conferring with producers about legal matters
- notifying County Office if contacted about legal hearings or controversial matters
- maintaining work records for three years

## FBI Background Investigation

LACs must wear a site badge to be displayed when conducting FSA business. The site badge requires a favorable FBI fingerprint background check before being issued.

A favorable FBI fingerprint determination must be received before a LAC Service Agreement can be signed or renewed.



## LAC Certification & Training

### Phase I Training

The twenty-four hours of Phase I classroom training covers:

- general NAP policy provisions, and other programs in effect for appraisal (ad hoc disaster)
- procedure modifications and changes (updates)
- loss adjustment forms and service functions
- loss adjustment forms completion, documentation, and distribution
- crop handbook, including harvested and stored production
- verifying the cause and time of loss
- documentation of uncovered causes of loss
- documentation of poor farming practices
- documenting appraisals and performing crop appraisal methods
- verification and use of acreage and production-to-count documentation obtained from area buying stations, processors, and packers, as applicable
- verification of entities and share arrangements policies and procedures
- the requirements of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
- ethics
- farm and environmental safety issues for the area.

### Phase II Training

Twenty-four hours of Phase II training includes actual field experience and classroom training for loss situations, including uncovered causes of loss and problem cases.

During the training, a LAC must:

- independently inspect the crop and complete at least two final appraisals or two structured field appraisals with no major errors
- prove proficiency to the trainer in all phases of loss adjustment activities

### Annual Update Training

Certified LACs must receive update training annually to remain certified. Update training must take place before work assignments for the new crop year and after the annual LAC Service Agreement is signed.

## Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

LACs shall not

- solicit or accept any money, gifts, or favors from any party that are designed to influence or give the appearance of influencing any loss adjustment findings or decisions
- use position to gain favor, influence, or financial advantage
- discriminate against any producer because 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 public assistance.

LACs must take precaution to ensure that there is no appearance or occurrence of conflict of interest. Therefore, Loss Adjusters cannot work in the county where he/she is the spouse of CED or COC member, engage in sales or administration of any MPCI policy, or adjust any losses for any member of their family.

In general, permanent, part-time, or intermittent FSA employees, including FSA State Committee or County Committee members, are ineligible for the Loss Adjuster Program.

## Required Equipment & Resources

Loss Adjusters must have reliable means of transportation and the ability to travel within the assigned area, which may cover several counties up to an entire state.

### More Information

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other eligibility requirements or restrictions may apply.

For more information about the FSA Loss Adjuster Program, visit or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).

