

For: State and County Offices

Preparing FY 2015 State Strategic Outreach Plans (SOP's)

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

Program outreach is a critical component to FSA's objective of ensuring access of information and programs to all producers and potential producers. A uniform format aligned with FSA's National Strategic Outreach Plan (SOP) enhances FSA's ability to plan, implement, track, and evaluate annual outreach efforts. Each State is **required** to have an annual SOP loaded into the Outreach Tracking Information System (OTIS) and filed in the Outreach Folder OUTR 3, according to 25-AS.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides FSA outreach mission and vision statements to include in FY 2015 State SOP's
- issues guidance to assist State Offices with developing FY 2015 SOP's in OTIS
- reminds States that the deadline for FY 2015 SOP's to be entered and certified in OTIS is **October 31, 2014**
- obsoletes Notice AO-1603.

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact State Offices
- State Offices shall contact Nancy Bond by either of the following:
 - e-mail to **nancy.bond@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-260-6069.

Disposal Date January 1, 2015 9-11-14	Distribution State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices
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2 Developing SOP Elements

A Outreach Program Statement of Purpose, Vision and Mission Statements

A statement of purpose defines the vision and mission of the Outreach program in a brief, comprehensive way. Vision and mission statements describe the current and future activities of the Outreach program and clearly state what sets the program apart from others.

In FY 2015, all States shall use the following FSA Outreach Statement of Purpose, Vision and Mission Statements in the FY 2015 SOP:

- **Statement of Purpose**

“FSA outreach activities are national, State and County Office informational and educational efforts for promoting FSA, and the benefits of participating in FSA programs, directed to non-participating but potentially eligible persons.”

- **FSA Outreach Vision Statement**

“To become the model for USDA program education and customer service delivery”.

- **Outreach Program Mission Statement**

“Our mission is to conduct innovative FSA marketing methods that:

- educate the public of FSA programs and/or services
- eliminate participation barriers
- increase program participation from potential and current small, beginning, socially disadvantaged, and underserved customers”.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

B Develop Operating Values

Operating values, or guiding principles:

- explicitly state FSA's principles and values
- serve as standards for judging both FSA policy and individual conduct
- define FSA's position and serve as a cornerstone for creating cultural awareness.

Topics generally covered by operating values include the following:

- importance of customers and customer service
- commitment to quality and innovation (creating model Service Center delivery)
- respect for all individuals (customers and employees **must** be treated in a fair and equitable manner respecting the rights of all)
- commitment to cultural transformation (value the unique differences and situations of others)
- importance of honesty, integrity, fairness, and ethical standards
- duty to stakeholders
- cooperation with partners.

Note: Compose a series of sentences that express the State's position on each of these topics or any others that SED may deem necessary.

C Identifying Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals who have a stake in how well FSA achieves its mission. Stakeholders normally include individuals, groups, private and public organizations, and local and State government agencies that have an interest in USDA products and/or services and how those products and/or services are produced. Examples of stakeholders include the following:

- COC members
- faith-based organizations
- farm workers
- farmer advocates
- farmers and ranchers
- land grant institutions
- nonprofit community-based organizations
- other leaders
- other USDA and Federal agencies
- tribal, State, and local government entities.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

D Identifying Stakeholder Expectations

Stakeholders have expectations that are required from FSA. Define what each stakeholder expects from FSA and if expectations are unknown, ask them. This can be accomplished through direct discussions, interviews, and questionnaires. Examples of expectations include the following:

- consistency
- cooperation and collaboration
- partnership and participation
- program education
- timely information.

E Identifying Critical Issues

The following are example critical issues that may affect FSA’s ability to deliver programs timely and accomplish the mission. List no more than 4 major **critical** issues.

- Cultural understanding and differences.
- Insufficient budgets (mailings, event participation).
- Office closings and staffing deficiencies.

F National Goals, Objectives, and Activity Examples

FY 2015 national goals have been loaded into OTIS for all States to adopt. The 5 goals are as follows.

Goal	Description
1	<p>Market USDA programs, loans, careers, and initiatives to the public and potential customers.</p> <p>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2. Objective 4 Pillar 2 (Increase Awareness of FSA Programs and Services).</p> <p>Example: Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct a microloan workshop with a local food hub’s producers • host a FSFL educational seminar with veterans • exhibit in the livestock barn at the state fair • exhibit at local Job Fair to promote FSA Career opportunities. <p>Note: Additional examples are available on the SharePoint web site at https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/mgr/DAFO/Outreach. Under “Shared Documents”, CLICK “Best Practices”.</p>

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2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

F National Goals, Objectives, and Activity Examples (Continued)

Goal	Description
2	<p>Encourage farm enrollment and program participation through targeted activities specific to small, new, beginning, underserved, and SDA farmers and ranchers and veterans, including those in persistent poverty counties.</p> <p>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 4.2. (Improve outreach efforts to socially disadvantaged farmers).</p> <p>Example: Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiate monthly standing “Doing Business with USDA” meetings at local Civic center or library • host Strike Force meeting with Tribal leaders, host New Farmer Open House for producers interested in farming. <p>Note: Additional examples are available on the SharePoint web site at https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/mgr/DAFO/Outreach. Under “Shared Documents”, CLICK “Best Practices”.</p> <p>When conducting activities to reach target audiences, plan accordingly. Within the targeted groups, discuss programs that are applicable to the group with whom you are speaking.</p> <p>Examples: Discuss NAP with FAV producers and discuss CRP with row crop producers.</p>
3	<p>Identify, create and cultivate relationships with new and existing Ag partners to improve and expand reach to shared audiences through sharing informational resources, conducting meetings and collaborative activities.</p> <p>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 4.4 Pillar 3 (Improve outreach and program education).</p> <p>Example: Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • host training in State Office with 2501 Partner Organizations • host meeting with USDA 1890 Program Liaison and Ag Extension Agents to discuss new Farm Bill programs • conduct limited English proficiency community assessment with Hmong National Development Outreach Specialists.

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2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

F National Goals, Objectives, and Activity Examples (Continued)

Goal	Description
4	<p>Improve public participation and member diversity on FSA County Committees.</p> <p>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.2 and 7 CFR Part 7 Sec. 7.8.</p> <p>Example: Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COC Power Point presentation at local Farm Bureau Young & Beginning Farmers/Rancher Group • explain COC Eligibility process at Lane County Pastors Association Meeting”.
5	<p>Promote awareness of Agriculture, Youth Loans, USDA Student Program Opportunities to youth.</p> <p>This goal was created to capture FSA activities with youth.</p> <p>Example: Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak on Careers in Agriculture at local High School • Power Point presentation on youth loans to 4-H members • discuss FSA Farm Programs and careers with college Ag Econ class.

G Identifying State Goals

A goal is a statement of intentions for a specific aspect of FSA. States have the option to enter a State goal not covered in national goals. SED’s should review any critical State-specific issues to determine if an additional goal is needed.

Note: States may add up to 2 additional goals to the required national goals provided.

There are 2 methods of entering goals as follows, for a:

- **short description of a State goal**, provide a brief description of the goal in the limited space provided in the OTIS field

Note: This description will be displayed when employees select applicable goals.

- **long description of State goal**, the OTIS field allows up to 500 characters to enter a long description of a goal.

Note: Ensure that the goal is described in detail for clarity.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

H Identifying Objectives

Objectives are measurable initiatives that support the goal. Review each goal and develop 1 or more objectives that will enable State and County Office employees to reach that goal. Ensure that each objective contains language that indicates when the objective has been met and who is responsible.

I Identifying Activities

Every SOP contains activities that **must** be accomplished to meet a specific objective. Activities answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how, and specify performance measurement indicators to determine successful completion of the activity to indicate the level or degree of completion. Activities for goals entered in OTIS should:

- link with the goal and objective
- include date, Service Center participating in activity, county location of activity, and number of participants by ethnicity, gender, race, and disability
- includes programs and initiatives discussed at the activity
- include partner organization worked with for activity
- include activity details recorded in the comment field.

3 Entering SOP's

A SED Action

SED's shall ensure that:

- State outreach coordinators (SOC's) enter FY 2015 SOP into OTIS for National Office approval by the **October 31, 2014**, deadline
- County Office outreach coordinators (COOC's) review State completed SOP with County Office staff, print a copy for County Office file in file OUTF 3 according to 25-AS, Exhibit 51.6, and explains to staff the types of activities that are required to be entered
- STC receives copy of final State SOP.

3 Entering SOP's (Continued)

B SOC Action

SOC's shall:

- use eAuthentication credentials to access OTIS at **<https://wdcprod80.sc.egov.usda.gov/otis/outreach/home.aspx>**
- on the Home Page, CLICK **“Write and Certify your Strategic Outreach Plan”**
- CLICK **“Add plan for FY 2015”**
- enter State specific information in all fields according to paragraph 2
- print a copy for SED to review and approve
- have SOP's entered into **and certified** in OTIS no later than **October 31, 2014**, upon SED's approval.

C COOC Action

COOC's shall:

- review State completed SOP with County Office staff and print a copy for the County Office file in file OUTF 3, according to 25-AS, Exhibit 51.6
- review SOP goals with staff and COC members
- explain to staff the types of activities that are required to be entered.