


For: State and County Offices

**Preparing FY 2016 State Strategic Outreach Plans (SOP's)
in the Outreach Tracking Information System (OTIS)**

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 SOP enhances FSA's ability to plan, implement, track, and evaluate annual outreach efforts. Each State is required to have an annual SOP in 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 2016 State SOP's
- guidance to assist State Offices with developing FY 2016 SOP's in OTIS
- the deadline for FY 2016 SOP's to be entered and certified in OTIS
- employee responsibilities to achieve FY 2016 outreach goals.

C Contacts

If there are questions about loading SOP's into OTIS, State Offices shall contact Cynthia Cuellar, Outreach Specialist, by either of the following:

- e-mail to cynthia.cuellar@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-690-4727.

If there are general questions about SOP's, State Offices shall contact Linda Cronin, Outreach Program Manager, by either of the following:

- email to linda.cronin@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-690-1299.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2016 11-13-15	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Developing SOP Elements

A Outreach Program Statement of Purpose, Vision, and Mission Statements

A statement of purpose briefly defines, aligns, and supports the vision and mission of FSA's outreach program. Vision and mission statements describe the current and future activities of the outreach program and clearly state what sets the program apart from others.

All States shall use the following FSA outreach statement of purpose, vision, and mission statements in their FY 2016 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, stakeholder engagement 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 services
- eliminate informational barriers for farmers and ranchers
- increase program participation from potential and current agricultural producers, including underserved communities".

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

B Developing Operating Values

In FY 2016, all States shall develop State-specific operating values, identify types of stakeholders served, stakeholder expectations and State-specific critical issues.

Operating values explicitly state FSA's principles and values and define FSA's position. These values serve as a cornerstone for creating cultural awareness.

Topics generally covered by operating values include the following:

- commitment to customer service
- commitment to quality and innovation (creating model Service Center delivery)
- respect for all individuals (stakeholders and employees **must** be treated in a fair and equitable manner respecting the rights of all)
- delivering programs with respect, honesty, integrity, fairness, and a sincerity of ethical standards
- cooperation with partners serving the agricultural community.

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:

- farmers and ranchers
- land grants and institutions of higher education
- nonprofit community-based organizations
- agricultural associations and organizations
- financial lenders
- other USDA and Federal agencies
- COC and STC members
- tribal, State, and local government entities.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

C Identifying Stakeholders (Continued)

Stakeholders have expectations that are required from FSA. Employees are encouraged to contact and define what stakeholders expect from FSA. Examples of expectations include the following:

- consistent engagement in delivery of programs and services
- cooperation and collaboration in providing program information
- quality customer service experience
- program education.

D Identifying Critical Issues

State Outreach Coordinators (SOC's) shall identify issues that may affect FSA's ability to deliver FSA programs and accomplish the mission. List no more than 3 critical issues. Examples of critical issues include the following:

- cultural understanding and differences
- program limitations
- language barriers
- program limitations
- insufficient budgets.

E Established National Goals

The following FY 2016 national goals have been loaded into OTIS for all States to adopt.

Goal	Description
1	Market USDA programs, loans, careers, and initiatives.
2	Conduct activities to increase participation in USDA programs and services by underserved audiences.
3	Identify, cultivate, and create new and existing partnerships.
4	Improve public awareness, participation and member diversity in FSA COC's.
5	Build youth awareness of agriculture through loans and programs, USDA student program opportunities and initiatives.

F Developing State Goals

A goal is a statement of intention for a specific aspect of outreach. In developing State goals SOC's shall review critical issues listed in SOP and ask what has to be done to meet the challenge of the issue. State Offices may add 1 additional goal to the 5 national goals in OTIS.

G Developing 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 measures and includes who is responsible.

3 Entering and Monitoring SOP's

A Entering Activities

SOP's shall include specific activities for each identified objective developed. Activities answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how.

All SOP's should have planned activities loaded at the beginning of the FY and the results of each activity loaded after the activity occurs according to 22-AO. Activities at the end of the FY without results loaded should be cancelled by SOC.

Note: Forthcoming OTIS training will provide employees with guidance on correctly entering activities in OTIS. All new County Office Outreach Coordinators (COOC's) and SOC's are required to complete OTIS training before obtaining access to the system.

B SED Action

SED's shall ensure that:

- SOC's enter the FY 2016 SOP into OTIS for National Office approval by the **December 4, 2015**, deadline
- all County Office employees are notified through DD when SOP has been completed and encourage all employees to review goals in OTIS and immediately plan activities accordingly
- STC receives a copy of the final State SOP
- the final copy of SOP is posted on the State webpage.

3 Entering and Monitoring SOP's (Continued)

C SOC Action

SOC's shall:

- access OTIS at <https://emso.fsa.usda.gov/otis/outreach/home.aspx> and login using eAuthentication credentials
- on the Home Page, CLICK **“Write and Certify your Strategic Outreach Plan”**
- CLICK **“Add plan for FY 2016”**
- enter State specific information in all fields according to paragraph 2
- print a copy for SED to review and approve
- enter **and certified** SOP in OTIS no later than **December 4, 2015**
- work with State Office specialists and DD's to enter planned State FSA program, loan, and recruitment outreach activities into OTIS
- ensure all SED and State Office attended activities are loaded into OTIS to support FY 2016 SOP.

D DD Action

DD's shall:

- ensure all counties receive the SED memo advising completion of State's FY 2016 plan
- encourage all managers to review with their county-assigned COOC and staff
- monitor and review county outreach activities in the district quarterly for performance measures and provide recommendations to enhance SOP implementation.

E COOC Action

COOC's shall:

- review State completed SOP with County Office staff and print a copy for the County Office file and file under OUTR 3, according to 25-AS, Exhibit 51.6
- review SOP goals with staff and COC members
- provide OTIS access to all employees in the county to record farm program and farm loan outreach activities in OTIS that align with SOP
- ensure that all farm program and farm loan attended outreach events are entered into OTIS to support FY 2016 SOP.