

For: State and County Offices

FSA State Environmental Coordinators (SEC's) and Their Responsibilities

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

All Federal Agencies are required to ensure that Federal actions and programs comply with the requirements of NEPA. Recent actions impacting FSA program delivery, including litigation alleging a violation of NEPA, demonstrate the need for diligence in carrying out all NEPA and other environmental compliance requirements.

SED's are the responsible Agency official for all FSA and CCC environmental compliance actions in their State. SEC's act as program coordinators to facilitate completing these compliance requirements.

The environmental compliance process is different for FLP's and farm programs (FP's) that warrants separate SEC's who provide expertise within their business area.

B Purpose

This notice provides the following about SEC's:

- revised roles and responsibilities
- guidance for SED's to ensure adequate environmental compliance coverage in each State
- requirement to establish multiple collateral duty SEC's for **each** business area (FLP and FP's).

C Concurrence

DAFLP concurs with the contents of this notice.

Disposal Date	Distribution
May 1, 2016 9-24-15	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 SEC Roles and Responsibilities

A Current SEC Responsibilities for NEPA and Environmental Compliance

This notice reinforces SEC responsibilities for carrying out NEPA and environmental compliance according to 1-EQ, subparagraph 4 B. SEC's are responsible to:

- advise SED's on environmental matters and coordinate the appropriate 1-EQ requirements
- provide guidance to State and County Office staffs about environmental issues, requirements, and procedures
- represent SED's at conferences and meetings dealing with environmental matters of a State Office nature
- act as liaison on State Office environmental and historic preservation matters with interested public groups and local, State, and other Federal Agencies
- serve as SED's alternate on State-level USDA committees dealing with environmental and historic preservation matters
- solicit the expert advice and assistance of other professional staff members within the State Office to adequately implement 1-EQ requirements
- provide technical assistance on a project-by-project basis to State and County Office staffs
- develop controls for avoiding or mitigating adverse environmental impacts and monitor their implementation, as needed
- review FSA actions that are **not** categorically excluded from further environmental review according to 1-EQ and recommend to responsible approving official either approval, disapproval, or modification after analyzing and considering:
 - anticipated adverse environmental impacts
 - anticipated benefits
 - consistency with environmental requirements defined in 1-EQ
- as needed, conduct environmental assessments for FSA actions in the State as indicated in 1-EQ
- provide assistance in resolving post-approval environmental matters at the State Office level
- maintain records of actions as required by 1-EQ

2 SEC Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

A Current SEC Responsibilities for NEPA and Environmental Compliance (Continued)

- coordinate and develop the State Environmental Guide (SEG)
- provide direction and training to State and County Offices on 1-EQ requirements, and as necessary, draft and issue State amendments
- coordinate and develop, for SED, monitoring of the State Office's compliance with 1-EQ, and keep SED advised of the results of the monitoring process.

3 Ensuring Adequate NEPA and Environmental Coverage

A SEC Duties

SEC assignment is a collateral duty. Responsibilities are:

- assigned in addition to the primary responsibilities
- **not** determined by grade.

SEC's shall report directly to SED on environmental compliance matters.

B Multiple SEC Positions Required

To ensure that requirements of NEPA and associated laws are met, SED's are **required** to assign collateral SEC duties to 2 employees. One to cover environmental compliance for FLP and the other will cover FP. If workload permits, SED's may request authorization from CEPD to nominate 1 additional SEC, up to 3 total SEC's.

This requirement does **not** apply in Delaware, Puerto Rico, or Rhode Island because of existing and forecasted workloads. Delaware, Puerto Rico, and Rhode Island **must** have at least 1 collateral duty SEC to cover environmental compliance for both FLP and FP for their State or territory, as applicable.

C Coordination among Multiple SEC's in a State

To ensure consistency in 1-EQ interpretation and application, multiple SEC's in a State will coordinate efforts including, but **not** limited to:

- consultation with regulatory Agencies
- SEG preparation and updating
- review and approval of environmental evaluations and assessments on FSA's behalf
- conducting appropriate environmental training for program staff and field employees
- monitoring State Office compliance with 1-EQ.

Notice EQ-143

4 SED Administrative Requirements of SEC Appointments

A Selection Criteria for SEC's

Employees selected should have appropriate prior or field experience for preparing NEPA documents or related formal education or training, including from the existing SEC and/or no staff, or will have completed this training within the first year of appointment. Workloads should be balanced or adjusted, as appropriate. Revised position description language and performance standards may be created consistent with this notice and 1-EQ.

Whenever possible, State Office-level employees should be considered for this collateral duty. SEC's report directly to SED.

B Deadline for Appointment

Within 30 calendar days from the issuance of this notice, SED's are responsible for nominating additional SEC's using FSA-855 (Exhibit 1) that is available at **<http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>**, to ensure that SEC's represent both FLP and FP.

SED's will submit FSA-855 for any new collateral duty SEC's to CEPD by e-mail, Attention: Nell Fuller, National Environmental Compliance Manager, at **nell.fuller@wdc.usda.gov**.

FSA-855, State Environmental Coordinator Nomination Form

This form is available electronically.		
FSA-855 (10-28-04)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency
STATE ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR NOMINATION FORM		
1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF STATE OFFICE		2. TO: U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency National Environmental Compliance Manager Conservation and Environmental Programs Division 1400 Independence Ave. S.W. STOP 0513 Washington, D.C. 20250-0513
3. The following individual has been selected to serve as State Environmental Coordinator.		
A. NAME OF NOMINEE		B. JOB SERIES AND GRADE
C. PRESENT POSITION		
4. Relevant work experience:		
5. Relevant education or course work:		
4. RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL BY SED:		
4A. State Executive Director Signature		4B. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
5. ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINEE:		
5A. Nominee Signature		5B. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
6. IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR'S CONCURRENCE:		
6A. Immediate Supervisor's Signature		6B. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
7. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MANAGER:		
7A. Compliance Manager Signature	7B. ACTION: <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL	7C. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
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