

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
100 USDA, Suite 102
Stillwater, OK 74074-2653

OK Notice AO-1075

For: County Offices

2004 COC Nomination and Election Plans

Approved by: State Executive Director



1 Overview

A Background

OK Notice AO-1075 requires each COC to develop and submit a plan to the SED that ensures all producers are adequately informed of the COC election process. The plan shall provide for targeting the generally under-represented producers such as minorities and females. The notice further stated the COC shall actively seek nominations from under-served groups such as minority and female groups. The 2004 Election Outreach Plan must be submitted to the SED by August 2, 2004.

All counties currently have an overall Outreach Plan that contains a supplemental COC Election Plan.

B Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to:

- Remind COC's to review their current COC Election Plan (the supplement to the County Outreach Plan). If changes are made, a copy of the revised supplemental COC Election Plan shall be submitted to the STO by August 2, 2004.
- Request specific details on the activities the CED will take in order to carry out the requirements of Notice AO-1075.
- Provide a example letter that may be mailed to under-represented or under-served groups that provides information on the COC nomination and election process.

*

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Disposal Date: 01-01-05 07-02-04 | Distribution: County Offices |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|

OK Notice AO-1075

2 Action

A COC Action

COC's shall review their current COC Election Plan (The supplement to the County Outreach Plan) If changes are made, a copy of the revised supplemental COC Election Plan shall be submitted to the STO.

B CED Action

CED's shall update their county profiles to ensure representatives of socially disadvantaged groups and other identified leaders are included and placed on your mailing list.

CED's shall provide specific details on how they will implement the provisions on Notice AO-1075 by completing Exhibit 1 of this notice. Exhibit 1 shall be submitted to the State Office by August 2, 2004. CED's should not complete the "Actual" dates and related items until requested by the SED.

Exhibit 2 of this notice provides an example letter that can be modified for your county and mailed to the representatives of socially disadvantaged groups. The example letter explains the importance and duties of the COC. The CED shall use this letter or a similar letter to inform socially disadvantaged groups of the COC election process. Nomination forms (FSA-669A) and a map of the LAA(s) in which the election will take place should be included with this letter.

The CED shall review the COC nominating and election process with all FSA employees in the Service Center in order that they can address election questions.

C FSA Service Center Employees

All FSA Service Center employees shall ensure they are familiar with the COC nominating and election process as well as the duties and importance of the COC.

*

LETTER TO BE MAILED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS.

Dear _____,

The _____ County Farm Service Agency is in the initial stage of the nomination and election process in which the farmers and ranchers of _____ county will elect an individual to serve a three year term on the local Farm Service Agency County Committee. We are soliciting your help in locating active farmer(s) and or rancher(s) in the county that will agree to serve a three year term on the local Farm Service Agency Committee.

USDA relies on the local leadership of farmers and ranchers that are elected to the Farm Service Agency's county committee system. Farmers know their communities and business best--and the Farm Service Agency draws from their local knowledge to make national farm programs work here at the local level.

The Farm Service Agency County Committee is the most effective voice for American Agriculture and should be made up of a diverse group of active farmers and ranchers that fairly represent the agricultural producers in the county. Diversity within the County Committee brings different skills, understandings, and perspectives to the work of County Committee, which in turn, better serves the local agricultural producers.

The Farm Service Agency County Committee sets rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program. The County Committees approve crop loans by reviewing individual cases, and decide the applicability of other programs like the Livestock Assistance Program or the Emergency Conservation Program.

The committee supervises the operations of the county office, including the hiring of personnel that deliver Farm Service Agency's programs. During a disaster, the County Committee is responsible for administering Farm Service Agency's emergency programs. When there's a question about the fairness of the application of Farm Service Agency programs, its the County Committee that helps resolve the issues. Committees serve a key role in USDA's check and balance appeals system.

Generally the county committee meets on a monthly basis for 4 to 8 hours, however, there could be critical times when the committee would be ask to meet more than once a month. County committee members will be reimbursed for their vehicle expenses to attend the monthly meetings, at the current rate of \$.375/mile. Currently county committee members are paid at a rate of \$14.26/hour.

*

The _____ County Farm Service Agency is currently accepting nominations for the county committee election for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 (see the attached map). Eligible voters in LAA 2 can place nominees on the slate of nominees. An individual that has an interest in a farm or ranch in LAA 2 may also place his or her own name on the slate of nominees. To place a nominee on the slate of nominees, the enclosed nomination form must be completed, signed by the preparer if completed by someone other than the nominee, and the nominee must sign the form indicating a willingness to serve. Completed nomination forms must be received in the _____ County FSA Office by close of business September 5, 2004. Once the full slate of nominations is completed, eligible voters will cast their ballots. The nominee with the most votes will serve a three-year term for LAA ?.

Fact sheets and additional nomination forms (FSA 669-A) may be found at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections

Your assistance in identifying and contacting suitable nominees and ensuring they are placed on the slate of nominees will be of great service to the agricultural producers of _____. If you need additional information or if we can assist you in any way please contact _____ at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

*