

USDA Farm Service Agency Outreach Program

For over 400 years, American agriculture has evolved through the contribution of agricultural ideas and practices shared by many racial, ethnic, and gender groups in the United States. All of these groups, their families, and communities have made significant contributions and improvements to the production of food and fiber, the availability of nutritious foods at an affordable price, and the social and economic vitality of America.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is improving outreach efforts through its Outreach Program to include and inform diverse and ethnic groups of our programs and services.



What Is the FSA Outreach Program?

The FSA Outreach Program is not a new, separate program, a minority program, or a civil rights program. "Outreach" is a way of conducting business for all USDA programs and

services to ensure that all people, especially underserved individuals and groups, throughout the United States and its territories are made aware of, understand, and have a working knowledge of USDA programs and services.

Why Do Outreach?

The Outreach Program will make our programs and services accessible to all and ensure that all of our customers receive equal and timely access to all FSA programs and services.

What Does the FSA Outreach Program Do?

The FSA Outreach Programs Staff coordinates and implements Agency-wide outreach activities and



projects to reach people, especially the underserved, who can benefit from the Agency's programs and services.

FSA places special emphasis on outreach of underserved customers because we understand and recognize that certain groups have not participated in or have received limited benefits from USDA/FSA programs. Our goal is to increase the participation of the underserved customers, including limited-resource farmers, in FSA programs, with special emphasis on those who are socially disadvantaged or members of racial minority groups.

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Who Are Underserved Customers?

Underserved customers are:



- farmers/ranchers and landowners/operators with limited resources, minority groups (including American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Aleuts), women, and the physically challenged, who may need but have not fully

benefitted from USDA assistance;

- individuals and groups who have not participated in or have received limited benefits from FSA programs, which may improve their quality of life and/or the environment;
- rural and urban communities;
- members of religious minorities;
- small specialty crop farmers, organic farmers, and other farmers with production practices that are different from most farmers in the area.

Outreach Can...

- Redefine the decision-making process in federally funded programs.
- Create new partnerships between USDA and community-based organizations, State and local governments, land-grant institutions, and individuals.

- Generate economic opportunities for participants of FSA programs.
- Minimize poor management of resources.
- Maximize human and material resources.
- Promote new solutions to problems.
- Enhance the ability of socially disadvantaged producers to operate viable farming enterprises that will produce income adequate to participate fully in USDA/FSA programs, pay debts, and have a reasonable standard of living.

Removing Barriers

To ensure maximum participation in our programs and services for underserved customers, the FSA Outreach Programs Staff works with its partners and customers with regard to eliminating the following barriers:



- All forms of discrimination, including racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender biases.
- Language, communication, transportation, and FSA program requirements and signup procedures.
- Delivery of program information to remote populated areas.

More About FSA's Outreach Program...

FSA administers farm commodity and conservation programs and makes loans to farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain conventional credit. The Outreach Program provides resources to help limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers improve their incomes through better farm management and financial planning.

FSA's Outreach Programs Staff ensures that the underserved, limited-resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers participate fully in FSA State and county committee elections through a variety of outreach initiatives. The staff works with community-based organizations (including

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churches and social groups); 1862, 1890, and 1994 land grant colleges and universities; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; and tribally-controlled colleges to provide technical assistance and training, and

enhanced program delivery to underserved communities and other USDA agencies. The Outreach Program staff also assists customers by providing program and service information in a timely and friendly manner, and by helping them understand USDA programs and fill out program forms.



Need More Information?

Further information about FSA programs and outreach projects is available at local USDA Service Centers and FSA State and county offices. The telephone

numbers are usually listed in the telephone directory under the United States Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. You may also obtain outreach and program information by contacting:

USDA/FSA
Director, Outreach Programs Staff
Ag Stop 0511
Room 3716
Washington, D.C. 20250-0511

Telephone: 202-690-1098

For more information about this or any other FSA program, visit us on the World Wide Web at: www.fsa.usda.gov



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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whilton Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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