UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

AR Notice AO-106

For: County Offices

2003 COC Election Outreach

Approved by: State Executive Director

1 Overview

A Background

The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (the Act) requires the Secretary to solicit and accept nominations for FSA COC member positions from organizations representing the interests of socially disadvantaged groups.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 requires the Secretary to prepare a report and make available to the public the participation rate of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers according to race, ethnicity, and gender.

A report by the Civil Rights Action Team concluded that under-representation of minorities and females on COC's may prevent disadvantaged producers from receiving information about program and available services.

B Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to remind county office of requirements, to provide guidance on outreach activities, to provide the reporting format for COC Outreach documentation, and to prepare an oureach plan to solicit minorities, females, and other under-represented groups to nominate persons in the COC election process.

2 Information

It is the responsibility of the SED, in consultation with the State Office Outreach Coordinator, to require that each COC develop and submit a plan to ensure that all producers are adequately informed of the COC Election. The plan shall include methods for targeting the socially disadvantaged groups. Refer to National Notice AO-1283 for additional COC Election Outreach and Nomination information.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2004	FSA Offices

3 Action

A Outreach Activities

Implement Outreach Activities to solicit minorities, women, and other under-represented groups for nominations for the 2003 COC election using the following guidelines:

- ***INFORM*** local groups and organizations of the purpose of the COC and the importance of the COC to be fairly representative of the producers in the county area, including minorities and women.
- ***REQUEST*** local groups and organizations to publish articles about the COC election in their newsletters. In rural areas, the majority of the members of these groups could be agricultural producers.
- ***SOLICIT*** local groups and organizations to submit nominations of producers that are representative of the agricultural farmers and ranchers in the county or area including minorities, women and other under-represented groups.
- ***PURSUE*** local groups and organizations to advise agricultural producers of the importance to vote in the COC election and to vote for producers in the county or area.

B Outreach through Other Groups and Organizations

Contact Organizations and Groups to see if they will provide assistance by including information in their newsletters and/or displaying election information. Some organizations and groups are:

- NAACP and other African American Organizations
- Hispanic Organizations
- American Indian/Native American Organizations
- Asian American or Pacific Islanders Organization
- Alaskan Native Organizations
- Agri-Women Organizations
- Business Women's Clubs and/or Professional Women's Clubs
- Extension Office and Homemakers of America
- Minority Colleges and Universities
- Churches
- American Legion
- Fraternal Order of the Eagles and Elks Lodge
- Masons and Eastern Star
- Knights of Columbus
- Jaycees, Lions Club and Optimist Club
- Farm Bureau
- Livestock Sale Barn
- Elevators and Co-ops
- Pork Producers Association
- Cattlemen Association
- Sheep Producers Association
- Poultry producers Association

C Outreach through Regular Media

Articles about the COC Election should be published using regular media such as newspaper, magazine articles, radio, television, etc. In addition, special mailings could be provided to women, minority, and all under-represented groups.

D Outreach Issues

Ensure that the following COC election issues are discussed during the outreach activities:

- The purpose of the COC
- The election process
- Deadline for nominations and voting
- Nomination process
- Soliciting nominations from groups representing producers who are fairly representative of agricultural producers in the county or area.
- Local Administrative Area
- Importance of voting in the COC election
- COC members and nominees shall be representative of the different genders, races, and origins of the agricultural producers in the county or area.
- Updating the Eligible Voters List to ensure that all eligible voters are included

E Preparing Outreach Plan

County Offices shall document outreach efforts on the COC Election Outreach Form in Exhibit 1 and submit to the State Office (Attention Rhonda O'Guinn) by **July 31, 2003.**

4 Contact

If any questions arise concerning this notice, please contact Rhonda O'Guinn at 501-301-3018 or rhonda.oguinn@ar.usda.gov .

Exhibit 1

2003 COC ELECTION OUTREACH PLAN

OBJECTIVE: *To develop and Implement an outreach plan that will ensure that all Produce are adequately informed about the COC Election process. This includes minority, Female, and other under-represented groups (African Americans, Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Disabled, Women, Socially Disadvantaged, etc…) and/or individuals.*

Outreach Plans are due in the State Office July 31, 2003

ACTION PLAN

- County Office will review and update name and address files of eligible voters. This should include spouses of eligible producers in the community.

Target Date :

- CED and COC will contact minority, women, and other under-represented groups who are eligible to vote but not yet in the County Office Name and Address file. Election materials will be delivered to them in the form of posters, fact sheets, and related materials. Election posters will also be posted, as applicable, in feed and supply stores, auction yards, and any places farmer may congregate.

Groups to be Contacted :
Method of Contact *(letter, phone etc…)*:
Target Date :

2003 COC ELECTION OUTREACH PLAN

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- CED to actively publicize election information in newsletters and in female and minority oriented group publications. Public Service Announcements (PSA) shall be sent to local radio and televisions stations, if applicable.

Media to be Contacted :
Target Date :

- CED will contact under-represented groups and farm organizations at the county level and request time to talk about the COC election.

Groups and/or Organizations to be Contacted :
Target Date :

- County Office will provide nomination forms and assistance in an effort to explain FSA programs and mission to develop a good working relationship with producers.

Target Date :

2003 COC ELECTION OUTREACH PLAN

Continued.....

- COC will review and complete the slate of nominees.

Target Date :

- County Office to send reminder postal cards to eligible voters.

Target Date :

CED's Signature	***Date***