2021 County Committee Election
Goals for today’s discussion…

- General Overview of County Committees (COC)
- Roles of COC Members
- County Committee Elections & Nominations
- Voting in the COC Elections
- How to Get FSA Updates

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General Overview of County Committees (COC)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
FSA is run by farmers!

- FSA is a unique Federal agency! Your voice is a big part of how FSA operates.
- FSA relies on an elected advisory board of farmers in each county to supervise the local office, conduct outreach to farmers, and make critical decisions about our programs.
- Authorized by Congress in 1930s.
- More than 7,700 committee members serve on more than 2,200 committees nationwide.
Responsibilities of COC

• Critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA.
• Select individuals to serve as the County Executive Director (CED).
• Administers farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
• Informs State FSA Committee of local administrative area (LAA) conditions. Makes recommendations to State Committee on existing programs.
Duties of the COC Members

Monitoring changes in farm programs.

Participate in county meetings.

Inform farmers, ranchers, and foresters of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs.

Ensure underserved farmers and ranchers are fairly represented. Have a voice at the table.
COC Members make Decisions on:

• Price support loans & payments
• Acreage verification
• Conservation programs
• Incentive, indemnity & disaster payments
• Payment eligibility

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How do I participate in the COC Elections?

➢ Nominate!
➢ Vote!
➢ Inform others!

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Get Involved

USDA encourages all eligible farmers, ranchers, and landowners to participate in the county committee election process.

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Roles of COC Members

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Who Serves on County Committees?

To hold office as a COC member or alternate, a person must fulfill each requirement:

- Be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations
- Participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law
- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Be of legal voting age
- Meet the basic eligibility requirements
- Reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving.

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## Roles of COC Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected Members</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elected by Community</td>
<td>Appointed by State Committee to represent underserved producers when elected members of an LAA do not have SDA representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Member</td>
<td>Non-Voting Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-11 Members per COC</td>
<td>1 Member per COC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-year term</td>
<td>1-year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fills out form FSA 669-A</td>
<td>Submits a letter of request for consideration to be appointed.</td>
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*One Alternate COC Member may replace a member for a single meeting, and only becomes a member if the alternate permanently replaces the member.*
Committee Basics

• 3 to 11 Members
• 3-year Terms
• Advisors appointed annually to represent women and minority interests
• Members and advisors are compensated for their time and travel
• Regular and Executive Session
Role of the Advisor*

Provide diverse viewpoints and represent the interests of targeted underserved communities in the decisions made by the County Committee.

Officially designated by the FSA state committee based on county committee or community-based organizations recommendations.

Selected to county committees in counties or multi-county jurisdictions that have significant numbers of underserved producers but lack such members on FSA county committee.

*Non-voting position
Secretarial Appointed COC Members

- Secretarial authority exercised to appoint minority voting members to County committees when:
  - County committees lack diversity
  - Appointment is needed to ensure fair representation.

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Advisor as a Representative of a Tribe

Can a Tribe nominate a representative to serve as a COC Advisor to represent the Tribe?

• Yes, the Tribal representative is able to serve as a COC Advisor because the representative is acting on behalf of the “entity”.

Can other organizations do this as well?

Only Tribal Governments can do this.

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County Committee Elections and Nominations

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How to Nominate a Candidate

To hold office as a COC member or alternate, a person must fulfill each requirement:

- be a producer who owns or operates a farm or ranch;
- participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law;
- be a U.S. Citizen;
- be of legal voting age;
- meet the basic eligibility requirements; and
- reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in which they will be serving.
How to Nominate a Candidate Continued

• Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate.

• Additionally, organizations representing underserved (minority and women) farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.

• Nomination forms are filed for the county committee at the office that administers a producer’s farm records.

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How to Nominate a Candidate, Continued

• To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A.

• The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected.

• This form is available at your FSA county office and online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.
Fair Representation within COC

- Fair representation of underserved (racial and ethnic minority) producers.
- NASS Census of Agriculture data used to identify counties with a 10% or more population of racial and ethnic minority principal farm and ranch operators.
- Identified counties are required to have an ethnic minority nominee, based on race and/or ethnicity.

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Nominating

• Runs June 15 – August 2
• Nominate yourself or others
• Forms available online at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or from any FSA office
• Nominee must sign the form

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Voting in the COC Election

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Who can Vote?

Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:

An individual who meets one or more of the following:

• Is eligible to vote in one’s own right
• Is a partner of a general partnership
• Is a member of a joint venture
Who can Vote? (cont.)

Be of legal voting age* and have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:

A non-individual who is the authorized representative of a legal entity, such as:

- A corporation, estate, trust, limited partnership or other business enterprise, excluding general partnership and joint ventures
- A state, political subdivision of a state or any state agency. (only the designated representative may cast a vote for the entity)
Eligibility to Vote for Tribal Agricultural Landowners

Every member of an Indian tribe is considered a landowner if the land in question is tribally owned or held in trust for the tribe by the United States even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.
Eligibility to Vote for Tribal Agricultural Landowners (cont.)

• All members of Indian tribes holding agricultural land are eligible to vote if they meet the age requirement. To be on record as an eligible voter, members of Indian tribes must be entered in Business Partner/SCIMS as an individual and:
  • Flagged eligible to vote
  • Entered in the correct COC/LAA on the COC Election website
How to Cooperate with USDA FSA?

Complete an AD-2047

- The AD-2047 is the USDA Customer Data Worksheet
- Collects Customer Information including:
  - Name, Address, Email, Phone,
  - Tax ID and demographic information
How can I vote?

Eligible voters are mailed a ballot in November.
• Postmarked by last day of voting.

Contact your County office.
• Eligible members that lost their ballot, can contact their local County office to vote in the office.

The Counting of the Ballots is Public.
• Location, date, and time are listed on the top part of the ballot.

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County Committee Elections Timeline

June 15 through August 2 – Nomination period

Nov. 1, 2021 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 6, 2021 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

Jan. 1, 2022 - Newly elected county committee members take office.
Voting

Period runs November 1 – December 6, 2021

Voters cast 1 vote per county office jurisdiction

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Where Can I Get More Information on COC Elections?
Call your local FSA office:

www.fsa.usda.gov/elections