
June 15, 2023

Dear American Ag Partners,

The 2023 USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee election season is officially underway. Do you know an agricultural producer interested in serving on a local FSA County Committee? Now is the time to submit that person's name as a nominee.

FSA county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and location administration of federal farm programs. Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community have been elected by their peers to serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Nowhere else in the federal government do citizen stakeholders play such a substantial and meaningful role in the delivery of federal programs.

Annual elections are held in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees within a single county or multi-county jurisdiction. This may include LAAs focused on an urban or suburban area. Farmers and ranchers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, reside within an LAA that is up for election, and are of legal voting age can be a candidate.

From June 15 to Aug. 1, 2023, individuals can nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, Tribal Nations and organizations representing underserved (minority and women) farmers or ranchers are encouraged to nominate candidates. Customers can identify which LAA they or their agricultural operation is in by using our new GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Participation in FSA's election process is an important part of the county election system — a system that serves all agricultural producers. Nomination forms are available on our website or from the FSA county office. Forms must be postmarked or delivered to the FSA office by **Aug. 1, 2023**. Voting takes place this fall, and new members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2024.

To submit a nomination, please reach out to the FSA staff to the county office in your state. More information is available at USDA Service Centers and/or fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Thank you in advance for helping us ensure FSA county committees reflect the diversity of American Agriculture and the producers they are elected to serve.

FSA Counts on You to Nominate and Vote!

Your Administrator,



Zach Ducheneaux

Urban County Committee Elections

Eligibility to vote and hold office as a county committee member



Overview

USDA has a new initiative being piloted in locations throughout the U.S. for urban and suburban producers. Included in the initiative is Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees (COC), which are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

A list of locations with urban county committees can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages all eligible producers and urban growers with farming or ranching operations to vote or hold office as county committee members, including beginning or established producers, historically underserved producers (minority and women), or large or small operations.

Urban and Suburban Farming

Urban agriculture generally refers to the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban settings, including things like vertical production, warehouse farms, community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and other innovations. Urban farmers and gardeners work among diverse populations to expand access to nutritious foods, foster community engagement, provide jobs, educate communities about farming, and expand green spaces.

How it Works

Urban and suburban producers are elected to serve by urban producers in the defined Local Administrative Area (LAA) to serve a 3-year commitment. FSA county committees will meet at least quarterly and help identify the needs of the growing urban agriculture market for both Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FSA programs by:

- Outreach and partnership with local stakeholders.
- Identifying urban agriculture community needs to assist the USDA in determining potential (legislative, regulatory, administrative) program enhancements.
- Tailoring program recommendations for future grower opportunities.
- Understanding and promoting available USDA programs.
- Providing education on USDA programs and FSA committees to urban and suburban producers and local stakeholders.
- Reviewing producer applications and assisting with administrative and programmatic oversight.

Who is Eligible to Vote?

Contact your local FSA office to confirm your eligibility. Affirmation of eligibility to vote must be determined for a vote to count in an election. General eligibility requirements include:

1. Is of legal voting age, or if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation for the entire farm.
2. Is engaged in the production or sale of an agricultural commodity as either:
 - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
 - Is eligible and capable to vote in one's own right.
 - Is a partner of a general partnership.
 - Is a member of a joint venture.
 - An authorized representative of a legal entity, such as:
 - A corporation, estate, trust, limited partnership, non-profit or other business enterprise, excluding general partnerships 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.
3. Participates or cooperates in any USDA program that is provided for by law.

Note: A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their urban operation(s) even if they have not applied or received USDA program benefits.

Contact your local FSA office to register as an urban or suburban grower, voter, or to be considered as an eligible nominee in the COC Election.



Interpretation of Voting Eligibility for Spouses in Community Property States

In community property states, the spouse of an eligible voter is also eligible to vote.

Local Administrative Areas

A county or multi-county jurisdiction served by an FSA county committee is divided into 3 to 11 local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA is represented by one member on the FSA county committee. A person may only vote in one LAA (the LAA in which he or she participates or cooperates in FSA programs or programs administered by FSA). Urban participants must have an interest within the county or multi-county boundary.

Individuals can identify the LAA they or their farming interests are located in via a county committee election GIS locator tool on fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Multiple Farm Interests in Same County or Area

Eligible voters who participate or cooperate in USDA programs on separate farms in more than one LAA in the same county or multi-county jurisdiction may only cast one ballot and be eligible to hold office in one LAA. Voters with farming interests in more than one LAA will only be eligible to vote once and will be assigned to the LAA closest to where they reside. Urban producers residing outside the designated boundary may choose any LAA they have farming interest in upon request.

Who can Hold Office?

To hold office as an FSA county committee member, a person must meet each of the basic eligibility requirements described below:

1. Be a U.S. citizen.
2. Be an urban producer with records administered through the urban COC jurisdiction.
3. Reside or have farming interests in the LAA that is up for election.*

** In instances where a candidate has no farming interest within the LAA they reside, they may be assigned to the LAA where their farming interests are located.*

4. A person must not have been:
 - Removed or disqualified from:
 - FSA county committee membership or alternate membership, or
 - FSA employment.
 - Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony.
 - Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

During the election period, individuals not receiving a ballot in the mail may obtain a ballot directly from their FSA county office. The ballot must be cast on or before the election deadline.

Discrimination Prohibited

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

FSA and NRCS Programs Available

FSA – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Organic Certification Cost Share Program, microloans and Farm Storage Facility Loans.

NRCS – Conservation financial and technical assistance, including high tunnels, soil health, and irrigation.

For more information on programs for available for urban farmers, visit farmers.gov/urban.

More Information

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. For program specifics or additional information about FSA county committees, visit a local USDA Service Center or the FSA county committee website at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Anytime

Contact your local FSA office for information on how to participate.

By June

Register to be an eligible voter.

Mid-June

Beginning of nomination period.
Forms available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Early Aug.

Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.

Early Nov.

Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Early Dec.

Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.

January 1

Newly elected county committee members take office.



Urban Agriculture County Committees

Frequently Asked Questions

June 2023

Are Farm Service Agency (FSA) Urban-Suburban County Committees New?

USDA is standing up the first-ever FSA county committees focused exclusively on urban agriculture. These new committees are part of USDA's efforts to better support urban agriculture and will consist of 3 to 11 members. County committees have been used as the vehicle for farmer input on FSA programs since the 1930s. They represent farmers and set priorities at the local level.

What will the Urban/Suburban County Committees Do?

The urban and suburban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost, and food waste reduction. They also

make determinations, listen to appeals and make decisions, and conduct outreach to urban and suburban farms and farmers for both FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Why is it important?

Until now, there has been no vehicle for local urban growers to affect USDA priorities and funding. Urban farmers are uniquely qualified to identify the needs of growers and their communities and provide direction on how USDA can best serve them. By serving on a county committee, you will be included in local decisions for USDA programs and can positively impact the services USDA provides urban farms.

How Long is a Term and What is the Time Commitment?

Committee members meet at least quarterly and terms are three years. Members have the option to run for reelection for up to three terms or nine years.

Where Are the Urban County Committees?

A list of locations with urban county committees can be found on fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Urban producers outside of the pilot areas who are interested on serving on county committees can inquire at your local FSA county office. Find your local office using our Service Center locator tool at farmers.gov/service-locator.

How Do the Nominations Work?

Urban farmers who participate in a USDA program or cooperate by providing USDA information about their farming operation in the local area identified for the urban county committee may either be nominated or may nominate themselves or others. Organizations may nominate candidates.



To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections or farmers.gov/urban.

When are the Deadlines?

Mid-June – FSA will begin accepting nominations for urban/suburban county committees.

Early August– Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office.

Early November – Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters.

Early December – Last day to return ballots to service center.

Jan. 1 – New member takes office. New locations establishing urban county committees may have a special election timeline that will be publicized locally. After the initial establishment, new committees will follow a yearly election cycle as outlined above.

USDA Programs for Urban Farmers include:

FSA – Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Organic Certification Cost Share Program and microloans, and Farm Storage Facility Loans.

NRCS – Conservation financial and technical assistance, including high tunnels, soil health, and irrigation.

How can I serve as an advisor on an urban county committee?

In addition to elected or appointed members, FSA county committees may also include non-voting minority advisors. Advisors are appointed to county committees to ensure underserved (minority or women) producers are fairly represented. Anyone interested in serving as a county committee advisor may submit their request in writing to the local FSA county office.

For More Information

Visit farmers.gov/urban and fsa.usda.gov/elections.

FSA-669A-3
(05-11-23)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

**NOMINATION FORM FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE COUNTY
FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION**

This form allows individuals to nominate themselves or any other person as a candidate. If additional forms are needed, this one may be copied or may be obtained at the County FSA Office or obtained electronically at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Each form submitted must be:

- A. Limited to one nominee.
- B. Signed and dated by the nominee in Item 3. Nominee must sign if willing to have his/her name placed on the ballot and agrees to serve if elected.
Note: Name shown on ballot will appear exactly the same as in Agency records.
- C. Delivered to the County FSA Office or postmarked no later than August 1, 2023.
- D. Signed and dated as a write-in candidate if elected as a member and willing to serve on the COC.

The County FSA Committee is responsible for reviewing each form to determine the eligibility of nominees. A person who is nominated on this form and is found ineligible will be so notified and have an opportunity to file a challenge.

Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. A producer is eligible to be a County FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) in which the election is to be held and is eligible to vote.

This is a non-salary public service position. A small stipend is provided to offset expenses.

Federal regulations may prohibit County FSA Committee members from holding certain positions in some farm, commodity, and political organizations if such positions pose a conflict of interest with FSA duties. The positions include functional offices such as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer; and positions on boards or executive committees. Conflict of interest restrictions also apply to employees, operators, managers, and majority owners of tobacco warehouses. Questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the County FSA Office.

The duties of County FSA Committee members include:

- A. Administering farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office.
- B. Informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of the FSA programs.
- C. Keeping the State FSA Committee informed of LAA conditions.
- D. Monitoring changes in farm programs.
- E. Participating in county meetings as necessary.
- F. Performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

FSA-669A-3 (05-11-23)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency	
NOMINATION FORM FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION			
1. NAME OF NOMINEE (<i>Type or Print Nominee's Full Name</i>)		TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE	
2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE		4. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE RECEIVED	
3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION: <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.</i>		5. COUNTY 6. LAA 7. STATE	
3A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Check here if nominee is a write-in candidate.</i>		8. NOMINATOR'S CERTIFICATION: <i>If this nomination is by other than self, the following eligible voter or representative of a community based organization hereby nominates the afore-named person to be a candidate in the next County FSA Committee election for the county.</i> 8A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR 8B. DATE <i>(If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required).</i>	
9. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE			
VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES: The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.			
ETHNICITY <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say	RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say		GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM			
Complete the form as follows:			
ITEM 1 Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be: <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election. B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member. C. Willing to serve if elected. </div>			
ITEM 2 Enter the nominee's current address.			
ITEM 3 The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.			
ITEMS 3A & 3B The nominee must sign and date.			
ITEMS 8A & 8B The nominator must sign and date. (<i>If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required.</i>)			
ITEM 9 Completing this item is voluntary.			
ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POST MARKED BY AUGUST 1, 2023.			
<small> NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (16 U.S.C. 590, et. al) and 7 CFR Part 7. The information will be used to obtain nominees for election to the County FSA Committee. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for County Personnel Records, USDA/FSA-6. Providing the nominee name, address, signature/date and nominator signature/date (when applicable) information is voluntary, but necessary for processing the form. Failure to furnish the nominee name, address, signature/date and nominator signature/date (when applicable) information will result in a determination of ineligibility for nomination for election to the County FSA Committee. </small>			
<small> Public Burden Statement (Paperwork Reduction Act): According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE. </small>			



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2023 URBAN COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS



ANYTIME
Contact your local FSA office for information on how to participate.



JUN. 1 2023
Register to be an eligible voter.



JUN. 15 2023
Beginning of nomination period. Forms available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.



AUG. 1 2023
Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA county office.



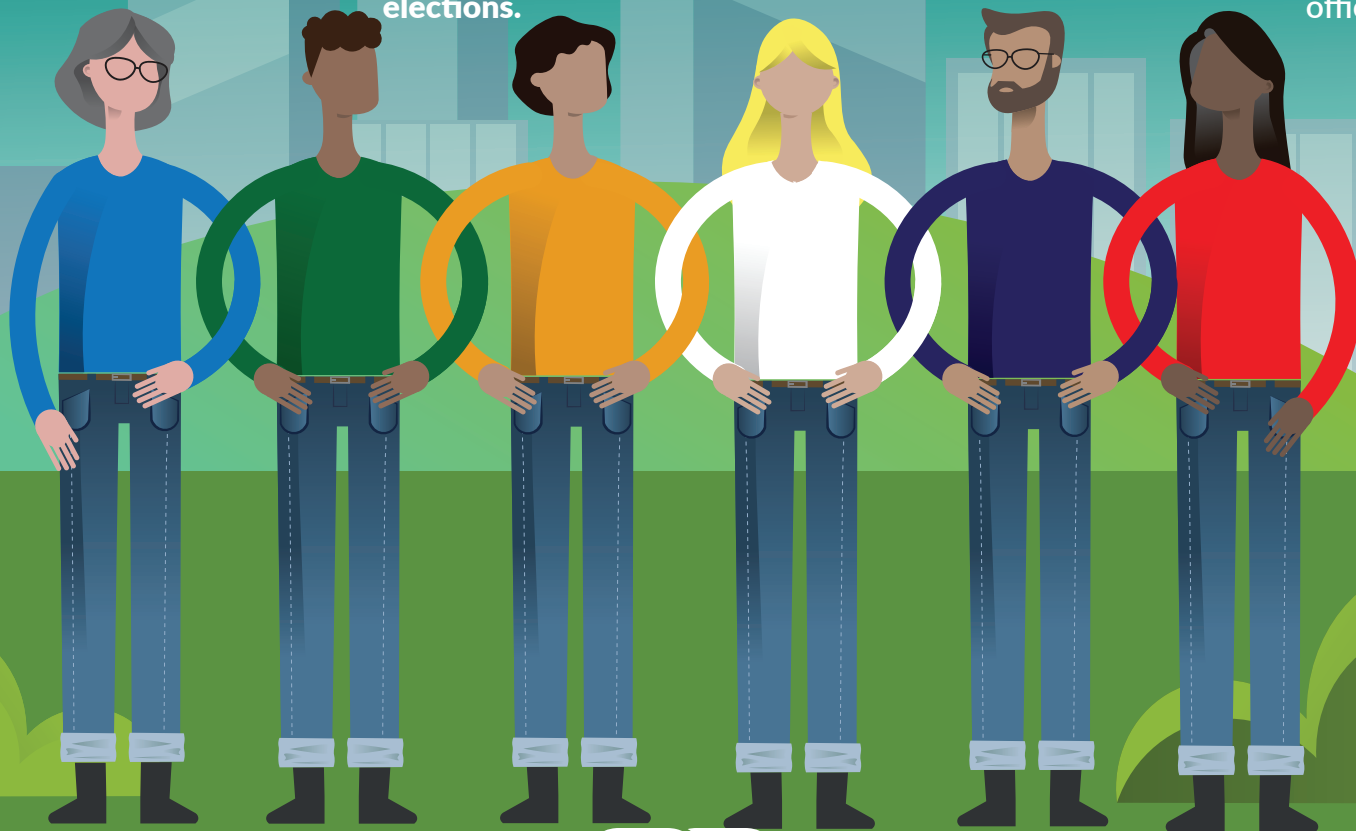
NOV. 6 2023
Ballots mailed to eligible voters.



DEC. 4 2023
Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA county office.



JAN. 1 2024
Newly elected county committee members take office.



BE THE LINK

between your agricultural community and the USDA

June 2023 | USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender