

For: State and County Offices

2001 COC Election Outreach and Nominations

Approved by: Acting Executive Director for State Operations



1 Overview

A

Background

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

The report by the Civil Rights Action Team concluded that under-representation of minorities and females on COC's and CMC's may prevent minority and female producers from receiving information about programs and available services.

B

Minority and Female Representation on COC's

To ensure minority and female representation on county or area committees, FSA requires County Offices to:

- solicit and accept nominations from groups representing producers who are representative of agricultural producers in the county or area
- seek female and minority nominees
- actively advertise the opportunity to nominate during the nomination period.

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<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>January 1, 2002</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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1 Overview (Continued)

C Publicizing Elections

FSA shall continue to publicize and contact socially disadvantage groups to:

- nominate eligible candidates to represent them
 - ensure that producers are adequately and timely informed about COC elections and procedures. Begin outreach activities immediately if not yet started.
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D Purpose

This notice instructs County Offices to:

- begin accepting nominations for the 2001 COC election
- actively seek minority, female, and producers from under-represented groups for nomination
- make COC election information available to local producers using FSA county or areawide newsletters, local female and minority-oriented newspapers, radio, and television stations, if available, or by any other means.

Note: The election calendar is in paragraph 3.

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2 Action

A

SED and STC Action

STC's and SED's shall be responsible for contacting State level offices of minority, female, and other under-represented groups. SED's shall:

- take an active role in contacting under-represented group leaders
- ensure that representatives fully understand the responsibilities of COC's and the process of election
- ensure cooperation and assistance from County Offices at the local level.

Notes: An under-represented group is a group of individuals under-represented on COC, who have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because they are identified as a member of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. Members of this group are also defined as socially disadvantaged in FmHA Instruction 1943-A.

SED's shall coordinate this effort when State-level offices involve more than 1 State.

SED, with the State Office Outreach Coordinator or designee, shall require each COC to develop and submit to SED by October 5 a plan to ensure that all producers are adequately informed of the COC election. The plan shall provide for targeting the generally under-represented producers such as minorities and females.

SED, Outreach Coordinator, or designee, shall review each plan and ensure that the County Office is properly providing necessary COC election information and procedures.

B

COC Action

COC's shall immediately develop a plan to inform all producers concerning the:

- COC election process
 - specific actions that the County Office will take to ensure that:
 - each minority, female, and other under-represented group is contacted as applicable
 - nomination forms and assistance are provided to all producers.
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2 Action (Continued)

B

COC Action (Continued)

It is critical to FSA's future that employees ensure that all producers have an equal opportunity to be a candidate for COC. COC shall direct employees to:

- listen to producers' concerns and suggestions
- explain FSA programs and missions
- develop good working relationships with all producers.

Nomination of eligible producers is the primary method used to obtain candidates for COC elections. COC's shall:

- complete the slate of nominees according to 15-AO, subparagraph 107 E
- add additional nominees if the required number of nominees is not received.

If nominees are added, COC, before adding any other candidates, shall add nominees up to the minimum number required, as follows:

- add a minority candidate to the slate unless a minority is already serving on the COC or is nominated
- add a female candidate to the slate unless a female is already serving on the COC or is nominated.

Note: Continue to accept nomination forms upon receipt of this notice.

C

CED Action

CED's shall:

- take an active role in contacting leaders of minority, female, and other under-represented groups
 - ensure that these group representatives fully understand the role of COC
 - be available, at the request of these groups, to meet with group members to fully explain the election procedures
 - ensure that nominations and the election is conducted per handbook procedure.
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D

Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact Karl Choice at 202-720-8782.

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3 2001 COC Election Calendar

A
Deadlines for
COC Election
Activities

The following table provides dates that shall be followed for the 2001 election.

Date	Activities
Immediately	Begin outreach activities, add eligible voters to the County name and address file, and accept nomination forms.
September 21	COC completes review of LAA boundaries and sends changes to STC. Note: COC shall document in the minutes the review and determinations concerning LAA boundaries.
October 5	STC completes review of COC LAA boundary changes and approves by October 5, 2001. Note: STC shall document in the minutes the review and determinations concerning LAA boundaries.
October 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete eligible voters list and make available to the public.• Issue public notice of election and LAA boundaries.
October 29	Final date to receive nomination forms.
November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review nominations.• Complete slates of nominees.
November 20	Final date for mailing letter to nominees.
November 21	Final date to mail ballots.
November 27	Suggested date to mail reminder postal cards.
December 3	Final date for returning completed ballots. Must be postmarked by this date.
December 10	Final date for counting ballots.

Note: It is expected that all State and County Offices shall follow this calendar.
