

**For:** State and County Offices

**Additional Guidance for 2003 COC Election**

**Approved by:** Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

A number of issues have been reported to the National Office about late arrival of ballots, return address discrepancies, and voters not receiving a ballot. Some of the concerns are caused by incorrect information in the FSA database, inconsistencies in databases, contractor oversight, or postal delivery issues. Because of these issues, DAFO has decided to make several adjustments to this year's COC elections.

**B Purpose**

This notice provides additional guidance for the 2003 COC election process.

**C Contact**

If there are questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact the State Office
- State Offices shall contact 1 of the following DAFO staff members:
  - Ken Nagel at 202-720-7890
  - Deborah Johnson at 202-720-0067
  - Zina Riley at 202-720-0258.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
March 1, 2004	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice AO-1293

### 2 Action

#### A COC Election Extension

The election date has been extended to December 15, 2003, because of the difficulties caused by the transition to vendor printed and mailed ballots. The ballots in affected counties shall be counted by December 22, 2003, and reported by January 5, 2004. Counties with serious difficulties shall immediately notify all eligible voters in the affected local administrative area (LAA) by first class mail that the COC election date has been extended. COC's not experiencing problems should remain on the December 1 schedule, as printed on the ballots. The availability of election reporting software will be announced as soon as possible.

#### B COC Ballot Issues

- County Offices shall provide FSA-669B to any eligible voter who did not receive a ballot by mail. FSA-669B can be found on the FSA Intranet at <http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>. County Offices shall also provide envelopes FSA-73 and FSA-73E to voters who receive FSA-669B. Advise voters that they may obtain these forms from their closest FSA County Office. County Offices may request the envelopes (FSA-73 and FSA-73E) from the Kansas City warehouse.
- If a voter receives a ballot for another county or LAA, advise the voter to disregard the incorrect ballot and return the ballot for their LAA. If the County Office receives both ballots, maintain the incorrect ballots until further notice. Do not count ballots that do not apply to LAA conducting the election.
- If the producers in a county never receive the ballots for their own election, a special election shall be held.
- If a ballot arrives at the County Office with postage due, the County Office shall pay the postage. Do **not** return the ballot to the post office or voter.
- Ballots containing entities as candidates were misprinted by the vendor and left off the person's name representing the entity as the candidate. The vendor has corrected these ballots and re-mailed them on November 24. Candidates must be a person representing a legal entity. An entity cannot be elected. This will only apply to the few LAA's where entities were listed as candidates. These offices shall extend the return deadline.
- If the County Office receives ballots from ineligible voters from other LAA's or counties, retain the ballots, document the ineligibility, but do not count them.
- Follow 15-AO procedure for requested ballots, counting ballots, and special elections.

**2 Action (Continued)**

**C Write-in Names**

A write-in name on a ballot is considered a candidate for that slate. Depending on the number of votes the individual receives, votes could place the individual in the position of new member, 1<sup>st</sup> alternate, or 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate depending on the number of names that appear on the ballot or received as write-ins. Write-in names have always been accepted and considered as running for COC. If the write-in individual becomes a member or alternate, the individual must certify to be willing to serve on COC by signing FSA-669A. COC shall determine if the individual is eligible to serve on COC using the procedure in 15-AO.