

For: State and County Offices

Entering Ballot Information for the 2007 COC Election

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

County Offices shall enter eligible COC nominee and ballot information, from submitted FSA-669A's, through the COC Election web site. This information will be used to create ballots for this year's election. If a County Office does **not** enter and save their ballot information, no ballots will be created for that county. The web site has been designed to allow County Offices complete control over the variable information on their ballots. County Offices may enter ballot information for as many local administrative area (LAA) elections as necessary. They are **not** limited to the 1 or 2 LAA's shown on the COC Election web site as being up for election this year.

B Purpose

This notice:

- reminds County Offices to dataload eligible COC nominee and ballot information into the COC Election web site using submitted FSA-669A's
- provides:
 - the date the screens will be available to the County Offices to enter information
 - instructions and screen prints for updating and maintaining COC/LAA data and eligible to vote flag on the COC election web site.

<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>January 1, 2008</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
--	--

Notice AO-1396

1 Overview (Continued)

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact either of the following DAFO employees:

- Kenneth Nagel by e-mail to **kenneth.nagel@wdc.usda.gov** or telephone at 202-720-7890
- Deborah Johnson by e-mail to **deborah.johnson@wdc.usda.gov** or telephone at 202-720-0067.

2 County Office Action

A Updating Nominee Information

Beginning immediately, before availability of the Ballot Information Screens on the COC Election web site, County Office's shall ensure that:

- each nominee can be located as an **individual** in the Producer Election Data File in the COC Election web site (see Notice AO-1379 for complete instructions on using the Producer Election Data File)
- the **individual** is flagged eligible to vote and in the correct COC/LAA in the Producer Election Data File
- all names of individuals are in proper name format

Example: First name, middle initial (if applicable), last name; **not as** Hillendale Farms or any business name).

- any race, ethnicity, and gender information entered on FSA-669A by the nominee is correctly entered or updated in the Service Center Information Management System (SCIMS).

B Entering Ballot Information

The screens for entering the nominee and ballot information should be available on the COC Election web site on **September 12, 2007**. All COC's that do **not** fall into 1 of the following categories shall enter their nominee and ballot information between September 12 and September 19.

Under the following specific conditions, COC's may have until September 24, 2007, to enter ballot information.

- COC's that did not receive any nominees may be delayed from entering their nominee and ballot data until a decision from the Secretary is received on how to proceed with the nomination process.

Notice AO-1396

2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

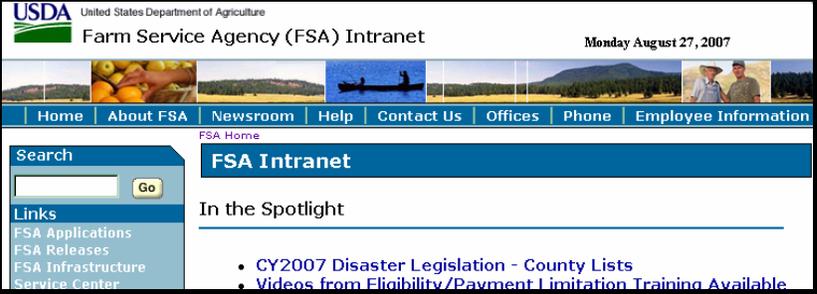
- COC's in targeted counties that did **not** receive any nominees, or that received no socially disadvantaged (SDA) nominees, may be delayed from entering their nominee and ballot data until the Secretary's decision is received.

Notification will be sent through each State Office about the Secretary's decision as soon as possible.

County Offices shall ensure that the Sample Ballot and Transaction Completed Screens are printed and retained in COC election files. Carefully follow the instructions in this table, through Step 14, to ensure that ballots will be received by voters for this election and that the ballots will be correct.

Important: If Steps 13 and 14 are not completed, there will be no ballots created or mailed to the voters for this election.

Enter ballot information according to this table.

Step	Screen	Action
1	Farm Service Agency (FSA) Intranet	<p>Go to http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa and under links on the left side, CLICK "FSA Applications".</p> 

Notice AO-1396

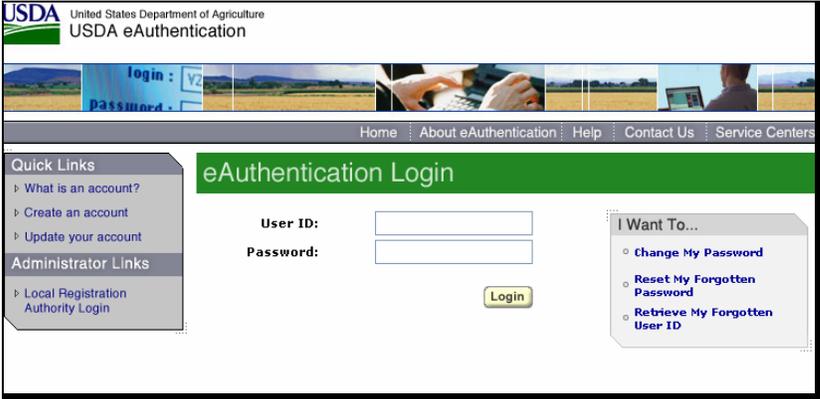
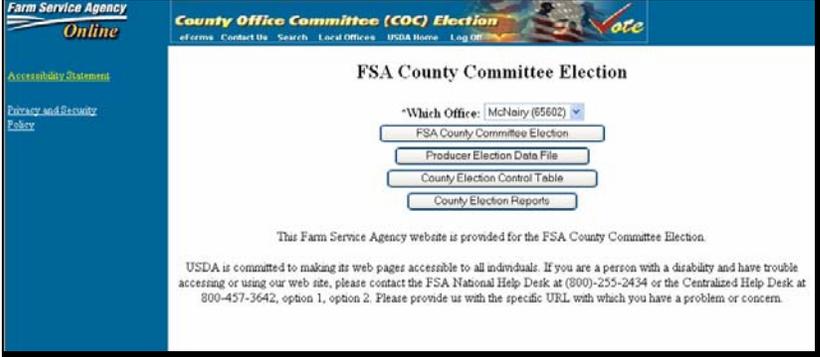
2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
2	FSA Applications	<p>Under Administrative Applications, CLICK “COC Election”.</p>
3	USDA eAuthentication and Authorization Warning Screen	<p>CLICK “Continue”.</p>

2 County Office Action (Continued)

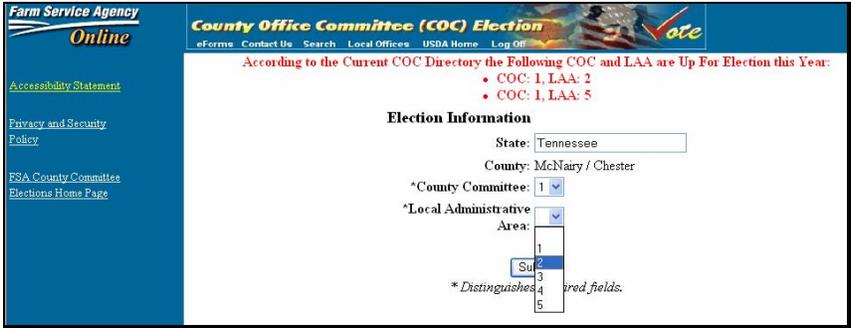
B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
4	eAuthentication Login	<p>Enter eAuthentication user ID and password. CLICK “Login”.</p> 
5	County FSA Committee Election	<p>Select the desired County Office name from the dropdown box. CLICK “FSA County Committee Election”.</p> 

Notice AO-1396

2 County Office Action (Continued)

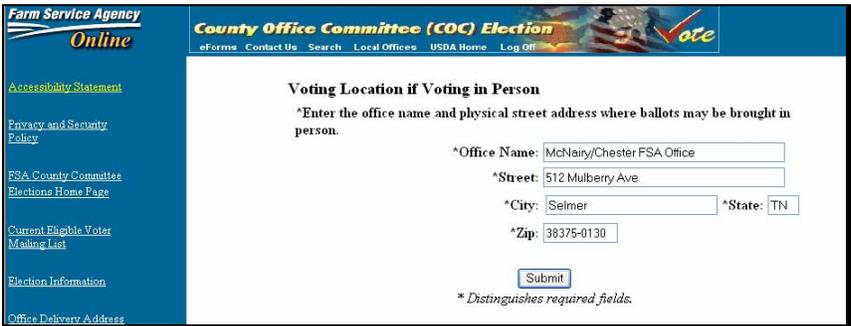
B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
6	Election Information	<p>From the drop-down box, select the COC number and the LAA number for the current COC election. CLICK “Submit”.</p> <p>Notes: Verify that the LAA displayed at the top of the page in red is correct. If this information is not correct, update the COC Directory on the web site.</p> <p>The application will not prevent the user from entering ballot information for a different LAA than what is displayed in the message. It is just telling the user which LAA is up for election according to what has been entered into the COC Directory. The COC Directory can be corrected anytime.</p> <p>Users may enter ballot information for as many LAA elections in their county as needed.</p> <p>If an incorrect LAA has been used since the beginning of the COC election process, exit the program, notify the State Office and prepare for a makeup election.</p> 

Notice AO-1396

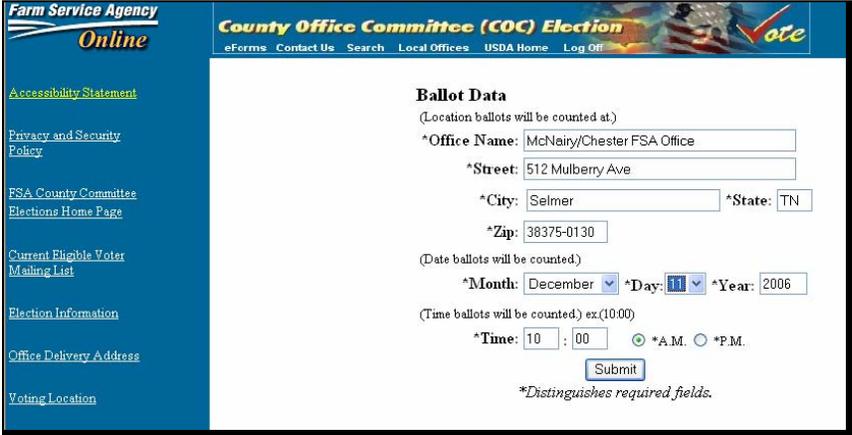
2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
7	Office Mail Delivery	<p>Enter the mailing address where the return ballots will be mailed and CLICK “Submit”. Ensure that the office name is entered on the first line, for example, “McNairy/Chester County FSA Office”.</p> <p>Notes: If abbreviations are used in the street address, see 5-AS, Exhibit 8 for USPS common address abbreviations.</p> <p>The system will accept either 5- or 9-digit ZIP Codes.</p> <p>CLICK “Submit”.</p> 
8	Voting Location if Voting in Person	<p>Enter the physical location (street address) of the County Office where an individual can hand deliver the ballots instead of returning the ballots by mail. Ensure that the office name is entered on the first line, for example, "McNairy/Chester FSA Office."</p> <p>CLICK “Submit”.</p> 

2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
9	Ballot Data	<p>Enter the address of the physical location (street address) where the ballots will be counted. Ensure that the office name is entered on the first line, for example, "McNairy/Chester FSA Office".</p> <p>Enter the date and time the ballots will be counted.</p> <p>CLICK "Submit".</p> 
10	USDA Service Center Information Management System (SCIMS) Customer Search Page	<p>Enter any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • candidate's ID number and ID type • full or partial last name • common name. <p>CLICK "Search".</p> 

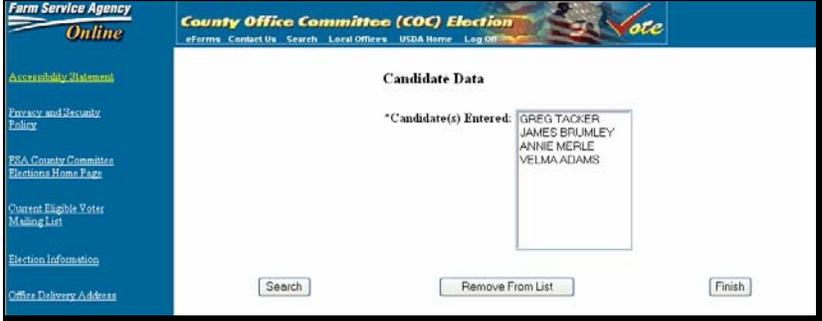
2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
11	Search Results	<p>A list of matches to the search data will be displayed. Select the nominee's name from the available list.</p> <p>Note: Users will only be able to select producers in the State and county where they have access through eAuthentication. Only producers in the correct COC/LAA with a check mark in the eligible to vote box in the Producer Election Data File, and coded as an individual in SCIMS, will be saved into the Candidate Data Screen.</p> 
12	Candidate Data	<p>When the name of an eligible producer who is coded as an individual in SCIMS is selected, the name will be displayed in "Candidate(s) Entered" box. If the selected producer is not in the correct COC/LAA, or not in SCIMS as an individual, the user will receive an error message and will be allowed to search again.</p> 

2 County Office Action (Continued)

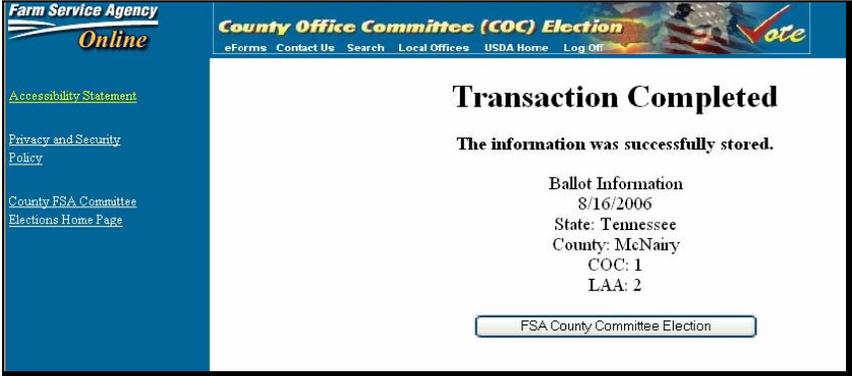
B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
12 (Cntd)	Candidate Data	<p>For each nominee, CLICK “Search” and repeat steps 10 and 11 to select nominees until all have been entered in the box on the Candidate Data Screen. CLICK “Finish”.</p> 
13	FSA County Committee Elections – COC Data	<p>Confirm the data in each section of the sample ballot for accuracy. CLICK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Yes” in the option boxes, if the information is correct • “No”, if any of the information is incorrect. <p>Note: If “No” was clicked in any of the boxes, then the corresponding screen will be displayed after users CLICK "Submit". Changes can be made to the information.</p> <p>When all of the questions have been answered with “Yes”, carefully review the entire ballot to confirm the information entered is correct.</p> <p>Print the sample ballot for your records.</p> <p>After the “Sample Ballot” is printed, CLICK "Submit". The information is not stored until users CLICK "Submit" after all of the questions are answered with “Yes”.</p> <p>Note: The information entered by the user on the “Sample Ballot” must be checked very carefully, as this is the information that will appear in the actual ballots. Any information that is incorrect on the sample ballot will be incorrect on the actual ballot. Ensure that the printout of the “Sample Ballot” is retained for COC records.</p>

Notice AO-1396

2 County Office Action (Continued)

B Entering Ballot Information (Continued)

Step	Screen	Action
14	Transaction Completed	<p>The Transaction Completed screen will be displayed. The information that was entered is not stored until the Transaction Completed screen is displayed; if this screen is not displayed, ballots for this election will not be created and mailed.</p> <p>Note: Print this screen and retain with the sample ballot in COC election records.</p> 

3 State Office Action

A Action

Each State Office shall ensure that every County Office in their State has completed entering the nominee and ballot information through communication with County Offices as well as the following resources:

- the Candidate Report available on the COC State AO Reports web site under "FSA Applications" at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/>
- ballot data entered by County Offices on the COC Election web site may be reviewed on the web site or by using screen prints faxed by County Offices to State Offices.

Note: State Office shall ensure that each County Office has:

- successfully entered the ballot information by finding the county listed in the State's Candidate Report located on the COC State AO Reports web site
- entered the total number of nominees they have received; a common cause of invalid elections occurs when County Offices fail to enter all nominees on the web site or do not CLICK "Submit" and save their ballot information.