

For: FSA Employees

Clarification of National Office’s Responsibilities for Promotion Events/Activities

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

Recently, confusion about how FSA outreach activities and responsibilities are executed was recognized as a common issue. FSA outreach, public affairs, recruitment, and special emphasis activities and responsibilities are handled by 4 separate staffs within the National Office. The staffs are:

- Outreach Staff (OS)
- OEA
- OCR
- HRD.

B Purpose

This notice, for program outreach and promotion events/activities:

- defines roles, resources, and responsibilities for each staff
- clarifies National Office’s responsibilities
- explains evaluation criteria, approval procedures, and funding
- provides contact information for National Office staff.

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact Sederis Fields, DAFO, by either of the following:

- e-mail to sederis.fields@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-720-7552.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2008	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

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2 Program Outreach and Promotion Events/Activities

A Clarification of National Office Responsibilities

The National Office intends to fully support State and County Offices with information that clearly explains the different outreach, public affairs, recruitment, and special emphasis activities.

B OS, OEA, OCR, and HRD Staff Responsibilities

Depending on the activity, OS, OEA, OCR, and HRD staffs may work together or independently.

3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities

A OS Program Outreach Activities

Because of Audit-09601-0011-AT, "Minority Participation in Farm Service Agency's Farm Loan Programs", FSA entered into an agreement with OIG, in early FY 2007, to rectify the identified problems and ensure consistent program outreach activities are accomplished in all State and County Offices. FSA, OS:

- is now tasked with coordinating and managing funds allotted to regions and States for program outreach activities, initiatives, and projects
- informs farmers and ranchers about FSA programs and services; its goal is to increase participation of the underserved, including limited-resource farmers and women, in FSA programs, with special emphasis on the socially disadvantaged or members of racial minority groups
- works with SED's and State outreach coordinators to help encourage minority groups to participate in the COC election process; increased minority representation on COC's is vital to the survival of limited-resource farmers and ranchers

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3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

A OS Program Outreach Activities (Continued)

- partners with other USDA agencies, to provide technical assistance, training, and enhanced program delivery to underserved communities, partners, and cooperates with the following:
 - community leaders
 - community-based organizations
 - farm worker groups
 - Hispanic servicing institutions
 - institutions of higher education, such as 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land Grant Colleges and Universities
 - local Government agencies
 - other Federal agencies
 - Tribal Governments
- currently uses the following rating scale to evaluate and prioritize funding requests for targeted program outreach events/activities for each State.

Rating	Description
A	Event held in a county that has a 10 percent or higher operator minority population.
B	Event will have over 50 percent minority or underserved participants.
C	Event will have up to 50 percent minority or underserved participants.

National Office Regional Outreach Coordinators (ROC's) evaluate each State's annual Strategic Outreach Plan and list of targeted program outreach events. Both **must** be complementary to have an effective State outreach program. Strategic Outreach Plans and funding requests **must** contain adequate information to accurately rate the event request.

Note: Promotion of FSA to the general public, external liaison with farm and agri-business constituencies, career and job fairs, special emphasis events, exhibit management, media promotion, and translations are outside the scope of OS. These activities shall be coordinated with HRD, OCR, or OEA.

3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

B Outreach Definitions

It is by statute that FSA uses the following terms/definitions, because they are in the legislation that mandate FSA programs and services. As such, **all** Federal agencies are mandated to deliver their programs to the public **without** discrimination.

Regional outreach coordinator (ROC) is a National staff representative responsible for coordinating and monitoring program outreach activities with States within their assigned regions.

Socially disadvantaged, as defined in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Section 2501, Pub. L.101-624, is an individual or group who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. This may include ethnic groups protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and referenced in section 8(a)(5) of the Small Business Act [15 U.S.C. 67 (a)(5)], which are as follows: Blacks, not of Hispanic origin; American Indians or Alaskan Natives; Hispanics; and Asians or Pacific Islanders. This definition was modified by the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 to include gender.

State outreach coordinator is FSA's representative or outreach liaison responsible for coordinating and monitoring program outreach activities for the State.

Underserved communities, customers, groups, or populations are defined as communities, individuals, groups, or populations that USDA agencies have **not** effectively protected, supported, or promoted in the delivery of programs and services on a fair and equitable basis. Historically the underserved are minority and women farmers/ranchers, farm workers, and land owners/operators that have limited resources; other minority groups (including American Indians and Alaska Natives); persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities.

C OEA Public Affairs Events

OEA performs the following 5 primary functions for FSA:

- congressional relations
- correspondence
- FOIA
- public affairs
- Web management.

Public affairs responsibilities include news releases, fact sheets, brochures, speech writing, employee communications, language translations, and exhibit management.

3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

C OEA Public Affairs Events (Continued)

Most significant is executing general public contact through State and county fairs, conferences, producer events, exhibits, trade shows and meetings. This area is supported within OEA by budgeted funds for materials and promotional items that are used to distribute FSA contact information.

PAS establishes promotional/informational booths at conferences, trade shows, exhibits and fairs, and extends general FSA information to the public.

OEA's goal with public affairs is to educate the public about the entire breadth of services available through FSA.

PAS coordinates with State and County Offices to supply booth display materials, FSA literature, and promotion items that carry the FSA's Web address and other contact information, so that the promotional item becomes a reminder about how to contact FSA.

OEA's exhibit management responsibility overlaps with 3 other FSA functions (HRD, OCR, and OS), because it is similar to their assigned tasks.

State and County Offices planning to participate in National, regional, State, or county functions involving exhibit displays or promotional items should coordinate efforts with OEA's PAS. Public Affairs Branch operates with a limited budget to supply equipment and promotional items for events that are on its annual calendar, which is accessible on the Web for State coordinators. Events may be added or deleted from the list at any time, but events added may **not** be adequately funded for the current year because of the budget limitations.

OEA's budget provides State Offices funds to be used **exclusively** for promotional items and event registration fees. The funds **must** be coded properly to be accepted by BUD's Federal Operations Section. BUD's Federal Operations Section created a new project code to distinguish OEA funded items from specific OS items; the new project code for general promotional items and event registration fees is "A028".

Additional funds are set aside to cover costs for the top 30 National trade shows and conferences, which OEA manages from the National Office. Events excluded from this list that SED or FSA deputy administrator recommends attending, **must** be considered on a case-by-case basis, and if OEA's budget has been exhausted, then expenses will be the responsibility of the host State and/or sponsoring FSA deputy administrator.

The list of top 30 National trade shows and conferences will be reviewed and modified annually, in August, to establish coverage for the upcoming FY.

Note: Promotion of FSA to socially disadvantaged and underserved program participants, career and job fairs, and special emphasis events is beyond the scope of PAS. These activities shall be coordinated with HRD, OCR, or OS.

3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

D OCR Special Emphasis Programs (SEP's)

OCR is responsible for providing leadership, direction, and advice to management and employees through administering programs, policies, and procedures that guide, educate, and support the enhancement of fair and equitable treatment for all employees and the people FSA serves. The scope of OCR responsibilities extends from the National Office to the National Field Office in Alabama, the Kansas City Office, and State and County Offices.

The Kansas City EEO/Civil Rights Office is responsible for administering SEP's and oversees the activities of the Kansas City SEP Councils. The SEP Council's primary responsibility is to assist and provide support to the EEO/Civil Rights staff in planning, implementing, and monitoring accomplishments of FSA's Affirmative Employment Plan and SEP's. SEP's presently active in the Kansas City Complex include:

- Asian Pacific American Program
- Black Emphasis Program
- Federal Women's Program
- Hispanic Employment Program
- Native American/Alaskan Native Program
- Persons with Disabilities.

Note: Promotion of FSA to the general public, external liaison with farm and agri-business constituencies, socially disadvantaged and underserved program participants, career and job fairs, exhibit management, media promotion, and translations are outside the scope of OCR. These activities shall be coordinated with OS, OEA, or HRD.

E HRD Recruitment Events

HRD provides human resources services to the FFAS mission area agencies; FAS, FSA, and RMA. HRD's mission is to attract, motivate, develop, retain, and reward FFAS's most valuable resource; employees. HRD develops policies and administers programs in the following functional areas:

- classification, organization, and employment
- employee and labor relations
- employee development and training
- performance management, awards, and benefits
- workforce planning and analysis.

3 National Office Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

E HRD Recruitment Events (Continued)

HRD is responsible for recruiting the talent needed to fill mission-critical positions for FAS, FSA, and RMA, which encompasses a variety of career fields. To do so requires HRD to identify potential candidate pools through various recruitment sources such as university career fairs, professional association conferences, and partnerships with student/alumni organizations. HRD use certain recruiting techniques to effectively market the career opportunities for FAS, FSA, and RMA. Five Regional Recruitment Teams (RRT's) have been established to participate in recruitment activities and to establish and maintain networks with educational institutions, community groups, and special interest organizations to develop and maintain a highly qualified pool of applicants to meet mission-wide hiring needs.

HRD partners with USDA on recruitment activities and with FSA OCR on targeted and special emphasis recruitment initiatives. Partnering with USDA and OCR allows FSA to cover a greater number of career fairs. The recruitment function **must** be accomplished according to the Merit Promotion principles and external hiring procedures established by OPM. Anyone engaged in recruitment activities **must** be trained and certified.

To support recruitment activities, part of HRD's budget has been allocated to provide the recruitment tools necessary to assist RRT's and FSA to implement recruitment and marketing strategies designed to attract exceptional men and women who have diverse professional experiences, academic training, and competencies for careers with FAS, FSA, and RMA. The allocation provides for purchasing advertisements, recruitment promotional items, registration fees, and travel associated with attendance at National conferences and career fairs, and partnership agreements, with student organizations. The allocation does **not** provide for registration costs associated with each State Office's participation at local conferences and career fairs.

Upon written request, the Kansas City Human Resources Office provides recruitment displays, recruitment giveaways, and marketing flyers to RRT's, human resources staff, and other employees who have been tasked with participating in recruitment events.

Note: Promotion of FSA to the general public, external liaison with farm and agri-business constituencies, socially disadvantaged and underserved program participants, exhibit management, media promotion, and translations are beyond the scope of HRD. These activities shall be coordinated with OCR, OEA, or OS.

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4 Contact Information

A OS Outreach Coordinator Contacts

The following table provides outreach coordinator contacts.

IF a...	THEN contact...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CED • County Office outreach coordinator • farm loan manager 	State outreach coordinator.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community-based organization • land grant university • State outreach coordinator 	ROC for your region (subparagraph B).

B OS ROC Contacts

Community-based organizations, land grant universities, and State outreach coordinators shall contact the appropriate ROC according to this table.

ROC Contacts by Region			
Region	Name	Telephone	E-Mail
Central includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia; and from the Northwest region, Wyoming.	Dan Schofer	202-690-2434	dan.schofer@wdc.usda.gov
Northeast includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island; and from the Northwest region, Minnesota and Wisconsin.	John Davis	202-401-7169	john.davis@wdc.usda.gov
Northwest States have been reassigned to other regions.	Maria Flores	On active military duty.	

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4 Contact Information (Continued)

B OS ROC Contacts (Continued)

ROC Contacts by Region			
Region	Name	Telephone	E-Mail
Southeast includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee; and from the Northwest region, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.	John Jefferson	202-720-0960	john.jefferson@wdc.usda.gov
Southwest includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah; and from the Northwest region, Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.	Jorge Comas	202-690-1700	jorge.comas@wdc.usda.gov

C OCR Contact

The OCR contact for SEP's is Johnny Toles, Director, by either of the following:

- e-mail to **john.toles@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-7197.

D OEA Contact

The OEA PAS contact for promotional public affairs events/activities is Kent Politsch, Staff Chief, by either of the following:

- e-mail to **kent.politsch@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-720-7163.

E HRD Contact

The HRD contact for recruitment events/activities is Pat Farmer, Director, by either of the following:

- e-mail to **pat.farmer@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0089.