

For: FSA Employees

**Conducting Outreach in FSA**

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

Obsolete notice AO-1444 provided guidance on using the Outreach Tracking and Information System (OTIS) 2.0 that was a means for measuring outreach performance based on data reported. OTIS 3.0 is now available.

**B Purpose**

This notice provides:

- supplemental guidance to assist State Offices and Service Centers with planning, recording, funding, executing and reporting SDA (targeted) and general outreach activities in FY 2011 when using **OTIS 3.0** that replaces OTIS 2.0.
- guidance for using targeted and general outreach allotments
- an explanation of the policy and procedures for managing annual State allotments for targeted and general outreach
- guidance for developing plans and processing payment for outreach events and activities planned that will conform to FSA’s national outreach goals, priorities, and outcomes.

**C Outreach Means Test**

FSA is required to conduct outreach (definition in subparagraph E) activities to farm and ranch advocacy groups, with special emphasis on organizations that support SDA agriculture producers. Based on legislative and OIG mandates, outreach was elevated as a **priority** for all FSA offices.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
October 1, 2011	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice AO-1483

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### C Outreach Means Test (Continued)

To determine whether an activity being considered is outreach oriented, the following conditions must apply:

- activity must take place outside the FSA office and reach more than 1 person, unless the 1 person is representing a large body or group, such as community based organization's staff or leadership
- activity will reach SDA or agriculture groups that may have **limited or no past exposure to FSA programs.**

#### D Using OTIS

OTIS is an Intranet software application that is used for managing, tracking, and reporting outreach activity information at national, State, and county levels. OTIS users include State outreach coordinators (SOC's) and Service Center outreach coordinators, National Office users, and report users, as follows:

- Service Center outreach coordinators can:
  - enter into OTIS, Service Center-level outreach activities scheduled within their Service Centers
  - add activity results into OTIS after the activity has concluded
  - modify, delete, or add clarification comments about Service Center-level activities
  - manage relationship with partner organizations
  - review and become familiar with State Strategic Outreach Plan goals and objectives
  - generate reports
  - conduct outreach activities that fit the means test outlined in subparagraph 1 C
- SOC's can:
  - manage the Statewide achievement of State goals and objectives
  - add Service Center-level and State-level activity plans for outreach activities that take place in multiple counties or multiple Service Center areas
  - add activity results after the activity has concluded

## Notice AO-1483

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### D Using OTIS (Continued)

- develop and certify Strategic Outreach Plans
- manage relationships with partner organizations
- review State outreach
- generate reports
- National Office users can:
  - add outreach activity plans for national or regional activities
  - add activity results for national activities
  - assist State Offices in the development of, and approve Strategic Outreach Plans
  - manage overall allotments issued to States through BU Notices
  - monitor/oversee outreach activity plans to ensure accuracy
  - provide technical assistance to State Offices and Service Centers in developing activity plans that are correct and complete
  - view activity details for all State Offices and Service Centers
  - oversee the achievement of national goals and review State goals
  - manage relationships with regional and national partner organizations
  - generate reports in response to Departmental, Congressional, and Executive agency requests
- report users can generate reports.

Notice AO-1483

1 Overview (Continued)

E Example OTIS Screens

The following are example OTIS screens that can be viewed by FSA offices with State-level or National-level OTIS access.

Show: 10 of 4 Records

Activities					
ID	Name	Service Center	Planned Date	Approved Funding	Actual Cost/ Results Approved?
<a href="#">KS-2010-0002</a>	Digital Media Activities Within U.S. Public Broadcasting  Bona Fide Need	Sumner	10/17/2010		
<a href="#">NAT-2010-0001</a>	(National-level) 2010 International Crop Expo  Bona Fide Need	Anderson	11/17/2010	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<a href="#">KS-2011-0001</a>	FSA Newsletter 	Sedgwick	2/11/2011		
<a href="#">KS-2010-0006</a>	(State-level) Kansas Farmers Union convention  Bona Fide Need	Allen	10/25/2010		

Home | About OTIS | Contact Us | Help | Exit OTIS | Logout of eAut

NOTICE Click the links in this bar to access [Fiscal Year 2009 events](#) and [Fiscal Year 2010 events](#). [?]

**OTIS Menu**

Welcome PATRICIA RALSTAD!

Role: State Outreach Coordinator

**Quick Lookup**

Enter an activity ID:

 

**Funding Management**

Track Allotments and Spending

**Manage Activities**

Add and View State Level comments

**Activity Details**

List Activities - Review

## Manage Activities

 Help

Fiscal Year:

- Unapproved Activity Plans <sup>1</sup>:** 3 [Fund and Approve Plans →](#)
- Unapproved Activity Plans with \$0 Estimated Cost <sup>2</sup>:** 0 [View \\$0 Estimated Cost Plans →](#)  
[Approve All \\$0 Estimated Cost Plans →](#)
- Unapproved Activity Results <sup>3</sup>:** 1 [Approve Results →](#)
- Approved Plans Without Results <sup>4</sup>:** 1 [View Plans Without Results →](#)
- Strategic Outreach Plan (SOP) <sup>5</sup>:** Certified on 10/27/2010 [Go to SOP →](#)
- Fiscal Year Status <sup>6</sup>:** Open [Close the Fiscal Year →](#)

## Notice AO-1483

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### F Outreach Definitions

The following are definitions used when discussing outreach:

- audiences mean FSA customers or potential customers and interested parties that are attending or being affected by an outreach activity
- bona fide need means a reason defined, in writing, by a partner organization that states why funds from one FY are needed to pay for outreach costs incurred for activities that take place/occur in the next FY
- broadcast media means a resource to deliver a message or information using radio, television, or Internet
- conferences mean organized or planned functions with defined topics or themes lasting for 1 or more days in duration
- cost items mean itemized costs for an outreach event broken down by item, such as rental of rooms, chairs, tables, audiovisual services, printing of meeting or conference materials, use of a fax machine and transmittal, booth space rental, registration fees, and workshop registration, etc.
- community based organization (CBO) means civil society nonprofits that operate within a single region of a State or within a local community

**Note:** May operate independently or as a subset of larger nonprofits and be funded through Federal, State, and foundation sources and internal program income. Some operate on a voluntary basis while others retain large staff and multiple offices. Some are formally incorporated, guided by a written strategic plan developed by a representative board of directors, who are functionally supported by a manager or executive director and paid staff. CBO's may include community-service and action, health, educational, advocacy, personal growth and improvement, social welfare and self-help for the disadvantaged.

- direct or e-mail means traditional postal or electronic mailing of information, brochures, posters, fact sheets, etc., made to a specific set of producers, such as the producers in a particular LAA, or to partner organizations, farm-related businesses, or other interested parties

**Note:** This differs from a newsletter that is sent to **all** producers, who are coded to receive mail, listed in SCIMS as the customers of a Service Center.

- exhibit means a display or exposition that showcases FSA programs and services available for potential and existing customers

1 Overview (Continued)

F Outreach Definitions (Continued)

- fairs mean public promotional events, such as State and county fairs/agriculture shows, where agriculture-oriented activities are scheduled
- farm shows means public promotional events generally sponsored by the agribusiness community or commercial entity
- field days mean demonstrations or farm/agribusiness tours where new, innovative, or quality agriculture practices that can be supported by FSA programs are presented
- general outreach efforts mean, at minimum, the following:
  - general means public events and activities that serve the public at large, **without** emphasis or focus on a special population or group

**Note:** A **broad mix** of race, ethnicity, and gender shall be present for the activity to fit the general definition.

  - partner of sponsor means organizations participating may be local civic, advocacy, or community-based organizations with a mission that includes the advancement of agriculture by expanding access to FSA programs
- meeting means a gathering that has a defined objective exclusively designed and presented to reach an identified audience
- newsletters mean a method used by State Offices and Service Centers to provide timely FSA program information such as signup, elections, etc.

**Note:** Newsletters are sent to all producers and other interested parties listed in the SCIMS database for a particular Service Center, and provide information on multiple FSA programs in each issue.
- observe means FSA staff attending an event or activity as an official of FSA, but not as a presenter
- outreach means activities planned for the purpose of raising awareness of FSA programs initiated at the national, State, or county level **conducted beyond the normal course of business** outside of initiating FSA office
- partner means a local, State, or national organization that provides training, education, outreach, or agriculture advocacy to all or a segment of the agriculture community
- plan means developing the concept and benefits of an FSA outreach activity and the details of FSA participation

1 Overview (Continued)

F Outreach Definitions (Continued)

- present means deliver a prepared talk or speech about FSA programs and opportunities to an audience
- print media means delivering messages or information using newspapers, brochures, press releases, fact sheets, etc.
- recruit means the process of identifying and interacting with qualified individuals at career fairs, collegiate interviews, etc. for the purpose of possible employment with FSA
- role means the work or functions performed by the FSA office staff when developing outreach activities
- sponsor means FSA and/or other Federal Agencies and non-Federal organizations that contribute resources to assist in establishing or delivering an education or outreach activity
- State Office outreach activities mean outreach activities directed to a Statewide audience organized and supported by an FSA State Office
- targeted outreach efforts mean, at minimum, the following:
  - significant majority means over **60 percent** of the audience participating in the outreach activity reflects a demographic makeup that is minority, women, or disabled, as defined in the Federal Civil Rights or ADA legislation

**Note:** This should **not** be the **only** criteria used to determine whether an event is targeted. The content of the programs **must** be designed to reach the intended audience.

- sponsors or partners mean organizations participating with FSA in a targeted outreach activity that are advocacy organizations with the primary mission to increase participation by SDA minorities, women, or disabled people in agriculture by expanding access to FSA programs
- technical assistance means a service that provides customers with custom learning experiences and individualized assistance
- workshops mean education and training provided to USDA customers (or potential customers) that enables them to participate in programs or receive services, realize benefits from FSA programs, and promote an understanding of the USDA mission, goals, and objectives.

## Notice AO-1483

### 2 Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities

#### A Explanation of Outreach Formula

OEA established a working group, in FY 2010, comprised of representatives from the Administrator's Office, DAFO, DAFLP, DAFP, and OEA to improve service, streamline processes, and determine an equitable distribution method for outreach funding. The new process was announced in obsolete Notice BU-718.

The new funding formula prorates general and targeted activities based on NASS 2007 State Agriculture Profile demographic data. The specific dataset selected for consideration is based on agriculture operators as defined by NASS.

Funding was allocated among 4 demographic categories of operators as reported by NASS, as follows:

- general - all operators, by State
- targeted - minority operators, by State; that is, African American/black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, or those of Hispanic ethnicity
- woman principal operators, by State
- disabled operators, by State.

NASS operator numbers were selected as the standard comparison because outreach activities **must** reach individual operators rather than farms. A focus on individuals enables FSA to inform the general and targeted (SDA) public through outreach efforts that bring new information to current FSA clients, or reach beyond to potential participants of FSA programs.

The NASS data contains a profile report for each State, identifying the number of operators in that State that fall in 1 of the 4 categories. Each category was assigned budget authority based on a pro rata share of FSA outreach dollars allotted nationally.

Targeted outreach budget authority to each State was determined by totaling all minority operators by State, and calculating that number as a percentage of all operators nationwide.

A designated amount of each State's allotment will be spent on targeted outreach activities. The formula also provides funding for general audiences that may be mixed in composition. This provides SED's within State Offices with more flexibility to conduct both targeted and general outreach in collaboration with Service Centers.

#### B Summary of the Steps in Planning, Participating, and Paying for Outreach Activities

A strategic plan **must** be entered into OTIS by each State, to enter and save any activity plan entry into OTIS. SOC's **must** certify the strategic plan on behalf of the State Office, in order to enter any outreach activity into OTIS.

The National Office must approve the State Strategic Outreach Plan in final form, after it is certified by the State Office.

Notice AO-1483

2 Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities (Continued)

B Summary of the Steps in Planning, Participating, and Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)

Each State Strategic Outreach Plan will reflect how the national and State goals will be achieved by all FSA offices in each State, collectively. To enter outreach activity into OTIS, a goal must be selected that will be achieved by the activity being planned and entered into OTIS. No entry may be saved in OTIS without it being attached to a national or State goal.

The following is an example of a Strategic Outreach Plan (SOP) that will be displayed in OTIS. The OTIS 3.0 SOC Training Manual, that will be provided under separate cover, will provide instructions for entering the content of a State Outreach Strategic Plan in OTIS 3.0.

[Certify the Strategic Outreach Plan]

**Strategic Outreach Plan**  
**Kansas**  
**Fiscal Year 2011**

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**Statement of Purpose** [edit]  
The purpose of The State FSA strategic outreach plan is to provide a framework for the design and delivery of FSA outreach activities that will reach both general and targeted populations within the state.

**Vision Statement** [edit]  
The FSA State office will ensure open access to all FSA programs to all producers without regard to race, gender or disability.

**Mission Statement** [edit]  
The mission in regard to outreach is to develop and deliver cost effective, measurable outreach activities that will reach producers throughout the state, with focused attention on producers considered socially disadvantaged as defined in the 20XX Farm Bill.

**Operating Values** [edit]  
The State and County FSA offices will conduct outreach in accordance with FSA guidance issued by Notice or through other communication considered as acceptable to the SED.

**Stakeholders** [edit]  
SDA and non SDA producers, FSA State Office and FSA County Office Staff and leadership, FSA Program Staff, National FSA offices.....

**Stakeholder Expectations** [edit]  
Measurable achievement of the outreach goals listed for FSA in Kansas through the development of specific planned outreach activities that will reach both targeted (SDA) and general producers throughout the state.

**Critical Issues** [edit]  
Reaching key SDA groups that have sufficient operational capacity to assist SDA populations in learning about FSA Programs in the State of Kansas

**Goal ID: 7 - State**

**Short Description**  
Build Relationship with a specific SDA Advocacy Group

**Long Description**  
Build Relationship with a specific SDA Advocacy group, the Disabled Farmers of Kansas.

**1) Objective** [edit]  
Prepare a State Notice that advises counties how to Network with the SDA Group of Kansas

**2) Objective** [edit]  
Coordinate a Statewide Outreach event with the SDA Group of Kansas

[+ add an objective ]

## Notice AO-1483

### 2 Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities (Continued)

#### B Summary of the Steps in Planning, Participating, and Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)

FSA goals are listed in OTIS under the strategic plan area. In FY 2011, national outreach goals will be developed by the National Office, and inserted in all State Strategic Outreach Plans. State Offices may supplement 2 additional, optional goals that are specific to their respective State. See Notice AO-1479 for reference to FSA's outreach goals.

#### C Outreach Event Planning: General and Targeted Outreach Activities at the State and County Levels

Based on the means test noted subparagraph 1 C, State Offices and Service Centers will plan outreach activities annually. SDA groups are addressed through targeted outreach activities. Agriculture advocacy- or community-based organizations that serve a broader population will be addressed through general outreach activities and funding.

For FY 2011, planned general and targeted outreach events and activities (paragraph 4) shall be reviewed individually and certified by SOC's, on behalf of SED. The National Office will **not** approve outreach activities in OTIS in FY 2011.

Events and activities **must** be entered and certified by State Offices individually in OTIS **before** obligating funds (subparagraph 3 B). OTIS 3.0 provides a means to certify activities as a group or individually. See SOC Training Manual, available in the Help Section in OTIS under "OTIS Training".

#### D Administrative and Budgetary Considerations

OTIS 3.0 will accept **only** \$0 cost activities until a budget allotment for each State has been entered into OTIS by the National Office.

There are overall administrative and budgetary considerations that need to be taken when planning outreach activities. To ensure that the greatest benefit is being gained from FSA funding committed to outreach activities, States shall seek to reduce the cost per attendee ratio (Total Dollars Requested divided by Total Attendees Projected) at every opportunity.

General outreach funding must be obligated for general activities (less than 60 percent SDA present) or may supplement targeted activities (60 percent or more present are SDA) at the State Offices discretion.

## Notice AO-1483

### 2 Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities (Continued)

#### D Administrative and Budgetary Considerations (Continued)

For FY 2011:

- youth events, including Future Farmers of America (FFA), Ag in the Classroom, and 4-H events and activities should be entered in OTIS as (028), “**General Outreach**” activities in the OTIS activity entry plan
- fairs and local agricultural activities will be sponsored using (028), “General Outreach” funding **only**
- booth or display replacement expenses will be paid using (028) “General Outreach” funding **only**
- print and broadcast media, newsletters, broadcast, and other media funding requests, to the public, will be entered in OTIS, but at \$0 cost, unless they are being translated into a foreign language.

**Notes:** Costs for translated newsletters **only** may be submitted based on the number of copies translated.

See Notice INFO-44 for guidance about newsletters, press release, and other communications policy.

States Offices may obligate formula funding for targeted and general outreach up to the amount approved in the Final Allotment when announced through a BU notice. Targeted outreach funding dedicated to minority, women, and disabled outreach activities may **not** supplement general outreach activities unless approved by the regional outreach coordinator. Funding that is **not** obligated for targeted outreach by July 31st will be reduced to the amount approved or obligated as of that date. Excess funds will then be repurposed for other activities.

**Outreach funding must be obligated and expended as activities take place. Results are to be entered into OTIS immediately after the conclusion of an outreach activity.**

#### E USDA Interagency Coordination Considerations

Funding contribution amounts from other federal partners, including other USDA Agencies, **must** be coordinated to minimize any duplication of sponsorships or financial support. Activity plans in OTIS should be notated accordingly, if other USDA component Agencies are partners in an outreach activity.

2 **Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities (Continued)**

**F Partner Group Coordination**

Outreach activity planning requires coordination with partner organizations to determine sponsorship costs, or research into meeting costs such as displays, handouts and the location costs if FSA is going to host the activity.

Sponsorship contribution amounts among partner organizations should be leveraged with FSA outreach funds to the maximum benefit possible. In addition, FSA offices will seek to minimize any duplication of sponsorships or financial support. Activity plans in OTIS should be notated accordingly, if other USDA component Agencies are partners in an outreach activity. Planners should seek efficiencies when planning attendees and Agency representation when multiple USDA Agencies participate jointly in an outreach activity.

	General	Targeted	Total
<b>State Allotment<sup>1</sup></b>	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$16,000
<b>Approved Costs (Not Spent)<sup>2</sup></b>	\$3,400	\$0	\$3,400
<b>Actual Cost<sup>3</sup></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Allotment Amount Remaining<sup>4</sup></b>	\$4,600	\$8,000	\$12,600

<sup>1</sup> Funds allotted for outreach activities. The National Office specifies how much of the allotment can be used for general audience activities and targeted audience activities. You cannot exceed the allotments when approving funds for activities.

<sup>2</sup> The sum of all funds approved for spending by the State Outreach Coordinator. It does not include activities with approved results.

<sup>3</sup> The sum of all funds reported as actual costs in approved activity results. Actual costs in unapproved activity results are not included.

<sup>4</sup> The State Allotment amount minus the Approved Costs amount and the Actual Cost amount.

## 2 Planning, Recording, Funding, and Executing Outreach Activities (Continued)

### G Using NASS Data to identify Service Center Demographics

NASS maintains agriculture census summaries that highlight key topics and demographic trends from the 2007 Census of Agriculture. Through the NASS web site at [www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/index.asp) fact sheets include narrative and data combined to illustrate current trends among U.S. farmers and agricultural operations.

### H Reserve Funds

The National Office will maintain a reserve:

- to assist States with significant outreach activities of interest to National Office leadership, and collaborate on events and activities where National Office leadership may be in attendance
- for SED's seeking assistance for innovative ways to reach underserved and targeted groups.

**Note:** These funds would be for efforts above the traditional outreach activity with a goal to accomplish better results. These initiatives shall be used to demonstrate more efficient and effective ways to accomplish productive outreach.

Additional guidance will be issued on accessing National Office reserve funding.

## 3 Reporting Outreach Activities in OTIS

### A Entering Activity Plans Into OTIS

An FSA pre-entered goal **must** be selected to align with every Outreach Activity Plan entered in OTIS. Each plan **must** have a profile of the estimated demographic breakdown of the target groups expected to be reached by the activity.

Notice AO-1483

3 Reporting Outreach Activities in OTIS (Continued)

A Entering Activity Plans Into OTIS (Continued)

Each activity plan **must** reflect a demographic breakdown of the gender, race, and ethnicity and disability, if applicable, of a target group. This information can be entered if provided to the Service Center or State Office by a partner organization, or SOC's may make their own estimate in absence of reliable data. The following demographic categories are **required** to complete an outreach entry plan.

Category	Description
Gender	Male/female breakdown of target audience, as estimated, <b>must</b> equal 100 percent.
Race	Total of all Race categories of targeted audience, as estimated, <b>must</b> equal 100 percent.
Ethnicity	Every entry <b>must</b> include an ethnicity entry and total ethnicity of group, as estimated, <b>must</b> equal 100 percent.
Disabled Audiences	Targeted by FSA, but the data for measuring the number of disabled farmers and ranchers nationwide, or by State, is not statistically significant, based on current sources. NASS does not specifically track such data.

This is an example of the screen that will be displayed to enter demographic data for the outreach activity as shown in the OTIS 3.0 SOC Training Manual.

**\* Demographic Profile**

\* Expected Number of Attendees:

**\* Gender**

Enter an estimated percentage of the expected attendees for at least one.

Male (%):       Female (%):

**\* Ethnicity**

Enter an estimated percentage of the attendees for at least one.

Hispanic (%):       Not Hispanic (%):

**\* Race**

Enter estimated percentages. The total must be 100%.

African American/Black (%):       American Indian /Alaska Native(%):

Asian (%):       White (%):

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (%):

**\* Disability**

Enter an estimated percentage of the attendees for at least one.

Disabled (%):       Not Disabled (%):

**Program Targets (Optional)**

You can enter a percentage for one or more of the following.  
The total can be over 100%.

Beginning Farmer/Rancher (%):       Youth (%):

Limited Resource (%):       Small Farmer/Rancher (%):

**Notice AO-1483**

**3 Reporting Outreach Activities in OTIS (Continued)**

**B Entering Correct Activity Plans in OTIS**

Activity plans require data and descriptive information be entered so the activity is **fully described**, the partner group is mentioned, and the type of activity matches the description. Vague descriptions will be deleted from OTIS after the year is closed out, if it is unclear who will receive the benefit of the activity planned.

The following table provides examples.

<b>Acceptable OTIS Entry</b>	<b>Unacceptable OTIS Entry</b>
Name: Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) Workshop Partner: XX State Extension Service Type: Workshop	Name: Personal visit with Mr. Smith Partner: None Type: Group Meeting
Name: Good Ag Radio Show Partner: Rural Development Type: Broadcast Media	Name: Post card reminder Partner: None Type: Print Media
Name: Direct Mail Campaign for Beginning Farmers Partner: none Type: Direct/Electronic Mail	Name: Letter Partner: None Type: Print Media
Name: COC Direct Mail Campaign to SDA Farmers Partner: The Hispanics in Farming Association Type: Direct/Electronic Mail	Name: SDA Partner: SDA Group Type: Public Relations

There are fields in OTIS for entering the overall cost of an outreach activity. The line item titled, “cost item” requires entering an estimated cost of the activity, based on research conducted on the **cumulative costs reasonably expected** to be incurred by the State Office or Service Center.

**Notes:** SOC provides certification (approval) of each outreach activity entered into OTIS. The State Office obligates the funding for the activity, after approval.

“Approval” of an outreach activity by certification in OTIS is considered as an approval by SED of each State Office.

Regular date reminders, post cards, and informational notices sent to producers and the media are **not** considered outreach activities, but are considered as communications activities done in the normal course of business when administering an FSA program in the State Office or Service Center.

Approval should **not** be done automatically.

Notice AO-1483

3 Reporting Outreach Activities in OTIS (Continued)

C Evaluating and Entering Results of the Activity in OTIS

FSA **requires** results to be entered and certified into OTIS 3.0 for each outreach activity entered and approved into OTIS. Results showing attendance, actual demographic breakdown at the conclusion of an activity, and total cost **must** be entered. Entries that omit results will be deleted from OTIS automatically as a part of OTIS’s closeout process each year. The exception will be bona fide need related activities that will remain open through the first quarter of a subsequent FY until they occur and results are entered. After the event occurs and results are entered, they will also be closed as a part of FY in which they were funded.

D SOC Certification in OTIS

For FY 2011, **only** State level certification is **required** for outreach activities in OTIS. **No National Office certification of State or county events is required.** Certification by SOC is considered to be equal to an approval by SED; therefore, it is key to plan quality activities, and certify **only** what can be fully executed and reported within the applicable FY.

The following screens are example OTIS screens.

Activities

ID	Name	Service Center	Planned Date	Approved Funding	Actual Cost/Results Approved?
<a href="#">KS-2010-0002</a>	Digital Media Activities Within U.S. Public Broadcasting [A] Bona Fide Need	Sumner	10/17/2010		
<a href="#">NAT-2010-0001</a>	(National-level) 2010 International Crop Expo [A] Bona Fide Need	Anderson	11/17/2010	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<a href="#">KS-2011-0001</a>	FSA Newsletter [A]	Sedgwick	2/11/2011		
<a href="#">KS-2010-0006</a>	(State-level) Kansas Farmers Union convention [A] Bona Fide Need	Allen	10/25/2010		

## Notice AO-1483

### 3 Reporting Outreach Activities in OTIS (Continued)

#### D SOC Certification in OTIS (Continued)

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Activities' page in the OTIS system. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About OTIS, Contact Us, Help, Exit OTIS, and Logout of eAut. Below this is a NOTICE bar stating: 'Click the links in this bar to access Fiscal Year 2009 events and Fiscal Year 2010 events. [?]'. On the left side, there is an 'OTIS Menu' with sections for 'Welcome PATRICIA HALSTEAD!' (Role: State outreach Coordinator), 'Quick Lookup' (with an input field for 'Enter an activity ID:'), 'Funding Management' (with sub-links for 'Track Allotments and Spending' and 'Manage Activities'), and 'Activity Details'. The main content area is titled 'Manage Activities' and features a 'Fiscal Year' dropdown menu set to '2011'. Below this, there are several summary items with counts and action links: 'Unapproved Activity Plans<sup>1</sup>: 3 Fund and Approve Plans →', 'Unapproved Activity Plans with \$0 Estimated Cost<sup>2</sup>: 0 View \$0 Estimated Cost Plans →' and 'Approve All \$0 Estimated Cost Plans →', 'Unapproved Activity Results<sup>3</sup>: 1 Approve Results →', 'Approved Plans Without Results<sup>4</sup>: 1 View Plans Without Results →', 'Strategic Outreach Plan (SOP)<sup>5</sup>: Certified on 10/27/2010 Go to SOP →', and 'Fiscal Year Status<sup>6</sup>: Open Close the Fiscal Year →'. A 'Help' icon is located in the top right corner of the main content area.

### 4 Paying for Outreach Activities

#### A Targeting Activities Designed to Serve the Needs of SDA Groups Use Project Code A026

Targeted outreach efforts are defined by FSA under the following criteria:

- a significant majority (**over 60 percent**) of the audience participating in the outreach activity reflects a demographic makeup that is minority, women, or disabled, as defined in current Federal Civil Rights or Americans with Disabilities (ADA) legislation
- sponsored or partner organizations participating with FSA in a targeted outreach activity shall consist of agriculture advocacy organizations with the primary mission to increase participation by minorities, women, or disabled people in agriculture by expanding access to FSA programs
- the subject matter content being presented by an outreach activity is specifically designed to the needs of the targeted group, that is, minorities, women, or disabled operators
- States shall prioritize efforts to plan targeted outreach activities jointly with partner organizations whose mission specifies service to target groups, that is, minority groups, women, and disabled operators covered under Civil Rights and ADA laws.

**4 Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)**

**B General Activities Designed to Serve the Needs of the General Agriculture Community at Large Use Project Code A028**

General outreach efforts are defined at minimum, on the following criteria:

- general public events and activities serve the public at large, **without** emphasis or focus on a special population or group

**Note:** A **broad mix** of race, ethnicity, and gender shall be considered under the general definition.

- partner organization may be local civic-, advocacy-, or community-based organizations with a mission that includes the advancement of agriculture in their area by expanding access to FSA programs.

**C Bona Fide Needs Requests**

Bona fide needs requests will be accepted up to July 31, 2011, for events that require immediate funding, but take place in the first quarter of FY 2012. To participate and certify a bona fide need activity, the State Office must submit a written request from the partnering organization hosting the activity under consideration. The request must specifically provide reasonable cause as to why outreach funds must be paid to the partner group in advance for an activity taking place in FY 2012. Bona fide need requests shall be obligated and completed **before** September 30, 2011. If obligation/payment has **not** occurred by September 30, 2011, funding approved under the Bona Fide Needs Rule will be rescinded.

**Note:** Funds **must** be obligated and recorded to the correct outreach spending account within 30 calendar days of the date the activity is recorded to occur in OTIS 3.0. Results and actual expenditures **must** also be entered **after** an outreach activity takes place.

4 Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)

C Bona Fide Needs Requests (Continued)

When entering bona fide need activities in OTIS 3.0, OTIS will record and track bona fide need requests within the year that funding was obligated to the activity being scheduled. The activity will record in OTIS using the Activity Plan Entry Screen. A “Bona Fide Need?” radio button will be displayed, as follows, to mark the activity on the Activity Plan Entry Screen. At the conclusion of FY 2011, the costs associated with that activity will be paid, but OTIS will holdout the activity from closeout processes until the activity occurs and results are entered. After all bona fide need activities are completed based on results entered, the FY 2011 funding year will closeout as final.

Asterisks (\*) denote required information.

\* Activity Type:  [Help](#)

**\* General Description**

\* Name:

\* Level:  [Help](#)

\* Audience:  General  Targeted [Help](#)

\* State:

\* Service Center:  in District 6

\* Bona Fide Need?  Yes  No [Help](#) ←

\* Funding Fiscal Year:

\* Activity Date:

\* Goal: [Select a Goal](#)

## Notice AO-1483

### 4 Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)

#### D Ensuring Payments to Vendors

State Offices shall include project code A026 or A028 in the accounting line when:

- reconciling outreach related charges paid by purchase card
- items, such as supplies and materials needed for a display or exhibit, or workshop materials

**Notes:** It is **critical** that payments by purchase card be reconciled **monthly** to accounts project code A026, “Targeted”, or project code A028, “General Outreach”.

See USDA Purchase Card regulations at [www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/](http://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/) when using a purchase card for outreach activity costs.

- processing sponsorship payments to partner organizations, as follows:
  - sponsorships funding requests are processed by FAX to Tracey Blom, Budget Analyst, OBF, Kansas City at 816-926-1588

**Note:** The FSA office in charge of obligating funds must submit the vendor’s information to OBF, Kansas City. See Exhibit 1 for miscellaneous payment instructions for details. Nontangible purchases, such as sponsorships, are paid directly by OBF, Kansas City as miscellaneous payments. Vendor contact information and vendor banking information is **required** to process a miscellaneous payment for targeted and general outreach sponsorships to be processed electronically, by direct deposit. See Exhibit 1.

- to allocate outreach funding under project code A026 or project code A028, using either a purchase card or miscellaneous payment direct deposit, there **must** be a written invoice, bill, or letter with itemized costs submitted to the office organizing the event.

**Note:** Only State Offices can obligate outreach funding and request must be signed off by SOC or SED and FAXed to Tracey Blom, Budget Analyst, OBF, Kansas City at 816-926-1588.

**Notice AO-1483**

**4 Paying for Outreach Activities (Continued)**

**E Payment Processing and Coding for Outreach Activities**

In FY 2011, if funds are allotted, targeted outreach funding obligations shall be included in BOC 25. General outreach funding for States shall be included in BOC 26.

This table provides an example of how funds should be reported.

<b>Outreach Purchased Items</b>	<b>Project Code A026 Targeted Outreach</b>	<b>Project Code A028 General Outreach</b>
Booth space rental, registration fees, workshop registration.	BOC 2586	BOC 2586
Promotional items.	BOC 2671	BOC 2671
Small/Display Equipment	BOC 31	BOC 31
Sponsorships (miscellaneous payment).	BOC 2540	BOC 2540
Supplies and materials used in outreach activity.	BOC 25, 26	BOC 25, 26
Travel.	Contact OBF, Kansas City	Contact OBF, Kansas City

Funds shall be expended as follows:

- funding to purchase **promotional items** for targeted and general outreach events and activities in FY 2011

**Note:** Purchases for promotional items are **not** entered into OTIS, but acquired under standard purchasing procedures. See 27-AS and 42-AS for guidance.

- **sponsorships** are intangible purchases paid by direct deposit to the community-based or other partner organization, with the exception of other Federal Agencies

**Note:** See Exhibit 1 for a list of information that **must** be provided to OBF, Kansas City, to ensure a proper deposit of outreach funding from project code A026 or project code A028.

- **travel budgets** may be reimbursed for outreach-related travel through a single transfer annually (contact OBF for guidance)
- **develop and participate in activity**, after an outreach activity has been certified and vendor payments issued if required in advance.

**Notes:** The organizing State Office or Service Center will ensure that FSA staff and leadership are in attendance to present FSA program information, serve as trainers in a partnership role in a training activity, or represent FSA in a technical assistance role.

FSA staff in attendance will collect attendance information, including if available, demographic breakdowns of the gender, race and ethnicity of attendees.

## 5 COC Representation and Yearend Closeout

### A COC in OTIS

The Strategic Outreach Plan provides the framework for all outreach activities in a State, of which outreach for COC is a part. When a State Outreach Plan is printed from OTIS, it reflects COC goals and the State's intentions for reaching new COC participants. The Outreach Strategic Plan is supplemented by COC activities that are collected and reported along with the Strategic Outreach Plan to USDA and on for Congressional review. See 15-AO and Notice AO-1482 for specific guidance.

### B Yearend Closing of Outreach Spending and OTIS

In July each year, the National Office will conclude all outreach plans as of July 31. Until then, the State Offices budget and outreach officials receiving allotments and allocations shall do the following:

- keep amounts authorized for obligations within specified limitations under targeted and general outreach allotments
- manage targeted and general outreach funds within amounts allotted
- forward obligation invoices or documents to the appropriate budget office for processing
- review reports on unliquidated obligations to determine validity of obligations, and advise National Office of remaining unobligated balances by July 31
- expedite clearance of invoices, bills, vouchers, etc., to ensure that accurate project and budget coding is in place for yearend closeout **before** September 15, annually.

### C OTIS Closeout

SOC's will complete the following closeout:

- cancel or delete all OTIS entries representing events or activities that were canceled or entered in error
- enter results, including actual costs, for all outreach activities that did take place
- complete and submit all bona fide need requests before July 31, and preserve documents of the need in the outreach files (subparagraph 4 C)
- certify results.

## **6 Additional Information**

### **A Reports**

OTIS 3.0 will provide reports using the “Generate a Report” Section on the left side the OTIS 3.0 Home Page. Reports on activities and expenditures may be customized using the Ad Hoc Menu, or the list of specialized reports listed. COC reports will reflect aggregate data by State and nationally.

A separate OTIS release will be launched explaining reports and guidance issues.

### **B National Office Role**

For FY 2011, the National Office will continue to provide States with technical assistance in planning and developing their outreach activities and budget, including the following:

- design methods for improving outreach delivery nationwide
- collect data and information for FSA, USDA, and Executive level reports
- develop allotments and coordinate BU notices with OBF
- work with States to coordinate events
- work with community-based organizations to coordinate funding for national outreach events and activities
- conduct spending reviews to ensure that the guidelines of this notice, as well as general FSA guidance, are followed as outreach efforts are conducted throughout the country
- the primary central contact for FSA about outreach activities at the national, State, and local levels
- serve as lead representative office to SDA minority, women, and gender advocacy groups on behalf of FSA.

**FY 2011 Miscellaneous Payment for Outreach Sponsorship Activities**

Sponsorship payments usually go to a community-based, not-for-profit vendor/entity that is working with the USDA for educational purposes, instead of contractual/agreement purposes. Therefore, these outreach vendors/entities are **not** held to the same acquisition regulations as most vendors.

After the following miscellaneous payment document is completed, FAX it to OBF, Administrative Expenses Branch, Federal Operations Section, Attn: Tracey Blom at 816-926-1588. Tracey will review the document to ensure that it is completed correctly and verify the vendor/entity's full business name is on the vendor file in the accounting system. After the review is completed, the document will be forwarded to the Financial Accounting Office (FAO) for processing of payment. If this is the first time the vendor/entity is receiving payment, FAO will contact NFC so that NFC can enter the financial information into the system. After payment is made, the vendor/entity should receive payment anywhere from 3 to 10 workdays for checks and 3 to 5 workdays for EFT's.

The Miscellaneous Payment document is submitted for sponsorships **only**. Itemized costs for attending an outreach meeting **must** be paid with a purchase card. **Contact OBF, Kansas City, if another method is required.**

<b>FY 2011 Miscellaneous Payment for Outreach Activities</b>	
Date:	
To:	
From:	
MP # (Formatted 9XX01; see page 2):	
Amount:	
Name of Vendor/Entity:	
Date:	
Activity:	
POC:	
Address:	
Phone:	
FAX #:	
Tax ID#:	
Routing#:	
Account #:	
DUNS #:	
Financial Inst:	
Accounting (Formatted 184XXXXX00A026 or 184XXXXX00A028; see page 2):	
BOC:	
CC: State Office Budget Contact	

**FY 2011 Miscellaneous Payment for Outreach Sponsorship Activities (Continued)**

The following information **must** be provided to OBF, Kansas City, to ensure a proper deposit of outreach funding from project code A026 or project code A028.

Item	Description
MP #	MP # is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> digit: budget FY</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> digit: 2-digit State Office code</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> digit: numbering sequential of the payment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> For the first miscellaneous payment for FY 2011 for the State of Washington, the MP# entry would be, “<b>15301</b>”. If this were the second miscellaneous outreach activity payment, the MP# entry would be, “<b>15302</b>”, etc.</p>
Amount	Budget line-item amount that was approved by Outreach Staff.
Name of Vendor/Entity	Full legal business name.
Date	Date the outreach sponsoring event is occurring.
Activity	Short description of the activity.
POC	Name of point of contact.
Address	Address of business.
Phone	Contact’s person phone number in case FSA needs to contact the individual.
FAX #	Optional.
Tax ID#	TIN of business. <p><b>Note:</b> If NFC is establishing the record for the first time, NFC will need to verify TIN against IRS records.</p>
Routing#	Routing number of business into which electronic funds can be deposited.
Account #	Business’s account number.
DUNS #	Business’s Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number.
CCR	Central Contractor’s Registration (CCR).
Financial Inst	Name of business’s bank.
Accounting	The 14-digit line of accounting is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> digit: last digit of FY, that is for FY 2011, enter “<b>1</b>”</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> digits: 2-digit fund code “<b>84</b>”, “Salaries and Expenses”</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> digits: 5-digit State Office organization code</li> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> characters: 2-position alpha-numeric sub-object code that identifies a lower level of object detail</li> <li>• 11<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> digits: project code for outreach payments should be “<b>A026</b>”.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples:</b> Examples of FY 2011 for the State of Washington for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>targeted</b> is, “<b>1845300000A026</b>”</li> <li>• <b>general</b> is, “<b>1845300000A028</b>”.</li> </ul>
BOC	Budget Object Class Code “ <b>2540</b> ” is used for payment to a nongovernment entity.