

For: State Offices and Service Centers

COC Election Ballot Counting and Organizational Meetings

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

In consideration of FSA’s current funding challenges, some States have proposed cost-saving options that may prove helpful in the areas of ballot counting and holding organizational meetings.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides:
 - States the flexibility to hold the organizational meeting immediately following the ballot counting
 - additional guidance that may provide some cost savings in the areas of:
 - conducting ballot counting
 - holding organizational meetings
- obsoletes Notice AO-1528.

C Contacts

This table provides contacts, if there are questions about this notice.

| IF located in a... | THEN contact... |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Center | State Office. |
| State Office | either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deborah Johnson, DAFO, at 202-720-0067 • Barbara Boyd, DAFO, at 202-720-7890. |

| Disposal Date | Distribution |
|----------------------|---|
| February 1, 2012 | State Offices; State Offices relay to Service Centers |

Notice AO-1530

2 Service Center Action

A Ballot Counting

15-AO requires COC's to conduct ballot counting and allows assistance to be received from FSA employees. All COC members are encouraged to be present for ballot counting. If a quorum is not available, at least 1 COC member **must** be present for counting the ballots with the assistance of adequate Service Center staff to follow requirements in 15-AO. This applies even if there is only 1 candidate on the ballot.

B Organizational Meetings

15-AO requires the COC organizational meeting to be held in January. Before the options provided in this notice, meeting both the ballot counting and organizational meeting requirements would have required COC meetings 2 months in a row. Effective with this notice, the organizational meeting may be held immediately following the ballot counting if all of the 2012 COC members are present.

The organizational meeting minutes **must** comply with the requirements in 15-AO, including becoming page 1 of the 2012 regular minutes. The proposed organizational structure **must** be submitted to STC along with the election results for approval, and will **not** become effective until the election results are approved.

Alternatively, if all 2012 COC members are **not** present at the ballot counting, the organizational meeting may be held by teleconference in January, so that **no** travel costs will be incurred. Documents may be mailed for signatures and returned to the County Office.

County Offices shall carefully review 15-AO, paragraphs 124 through 144 to ensure that all requirements for ballot counting, post-election activities, and holding the organizational meetings are met.

C State Office Action

State Offices shall ensure that Service Centers are aware of and follow the guidance provided in this notice.