

For: FSA Employees

**Preparing FY 2013 Strategic Outreach Plans (SOP's) in the
Outreach Tracking Information System (OTIS)**

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

Outreach is a critical component to FSA's objective of ensuring access of information and programs to all producers and potential producers. A uniform format and set of criteria enhance FSA's ability to plan, implement, track, and evaluate outreach efforts. Each State shall have their SOP loaded in OTIS and filed in the Outreach Folder, "OUTR 3", according to 25-AS.

B Purpose

This notice provides guidance to assist State Offices with developing FY 2013 SOP's (Exhibit 1) in OTIS.

C Contacts

If there are questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact the State Outreach Coordinator (SOC)
- SOC's shall contact J. Latrice Hill by either of the following:
 - e-mail at **latrice.hill@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-690-1700.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2013	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Developing SOP Elements

A Developing Statements of Purpose

A statement of purpose defines the vision and mission of FSA in a brief, comprehensive way. A summary of key points and a clear idea of the target market are essential.

SOC's shall combine the established goals, mission, and vision provided in this notice into a short and memorable statement focused directly at State or County Offices target audience, as applicable.

Vision and mission statements describe the current and future activities of FSA and clearly state what sets FSA apart from other Agencies. FSA's Outreach Vision and Mission Statements are provided to assist in creating the statement of purpose for the State's SOP.

The statement of purpose should provide the following:

- description of the services
- target customers
- description of what sets the service apart from others.

SOC's shall compose a paragraph or a set of sentences that summarizes the purpose of FSA, based on the following statements:

- **Outreach Vision Statement**

“The vision of outreach is to deliver FSA program education and access to existing and potential farmers and ranchers, including the small, beginning, underserved, and socially disadvantaged, through an extraordinary customer-driven employee base, offering the highest level of local customer service, while helping to ensure a strong safety net for all of America's farmers and ranchers.”

- **Outreach Mission Statement**

“The mission of outreach is to assist the Agency in reducing inequalities by increasing the participation of small, beginning, socially disadvantaged, and/or underserved farmers and ranchers and by providing all family farmers and ranchers equal access to the programs to achieve and maintain economic viability.”

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

B Developing Operating Values

Operating values or guiding principles:

- explicitly state FSA's principles and values
- serve as standards for judging both Agency policies and actions, and individual conduct
- define FSA's position
- serve as a cornerstone for culture building.

Topics generally covered by values include the following:

- importance of customers and customer service
- commitment to quality
- commitment to innovation
- respect for the individual person and the duty FSA has to employees and external customers
- importance of honesty, integrity, fairness, and ethical standards
- duty to stakeholders
- importance of protecting the environment
- cooperation with partners.

SOC's shall compose a series of sentences that express FSA's position on each of these topics or any others that are deemed necessary.

C Identifying Stakeholders

Stakeholders:

- are individuals who have a stake in how well FSA achieves its mission
- normally include the members of FSA, customers, and shareholders.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

C Identifying Stakeholders (Continued)

SOC's shall list all stakeholders for the State.

Example: The following list provides examples of stakeholders:

- agricultural lenders
- COC members
- faith-based organizations
- farm workers
- farmer advocates
- farmers and ranchers
- land grant institutions
- non-profit, community-based organizations
- other USDA and Federal agencies
- tribal, State, and local government entities.

D Identifying Stakeholders' Expectations

Expectations are things that the stakeholders expect from FSA. SOC's shall define what each expects from FSA. If employee does not know what is expected, talk with stakeholders and discover exactly what their expectations are. This can be accomplished by direct discussions and interviews.

Example: The following list provides examples of stakeholder expectations:

- build relationships
- consistency and truthfulness
- cooperation and collaboration
- information
- partnerships.

E Identifying Critical Issues

SOC's shall identify issues that may affect FSA's ability to deliver FSA programs and accomplish the mission. List no more than 5 major **critical** issues.

Example: The following list provides examples of critical issues.

- cultural understanding and differences
- insufficient budgets (mailings, event participation)
- office closings
- program limitations.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

F Established National Goals

The following FY 2013 national goals have been loaded into OTIS for all States to adopt.

Goal	Description
1	Market FSA programs to the public and potential producers.
2	Conduct collaborative activities with partners to expand reach to underserved audiences.
3	Promote FSA to media sources.
4	Improve public awareness and promote diversity of FSA COC election process.

G Developing State Goals

A goal is a statement of intentions for a specific aspect of outreach. In developing State goals, SOC’s shall review critical issues and ask what has to be done to meet the challenge of the issue. State Offices may add up to 2 additional goals to the 4 national goals established in OTIS.

H Developing Objectives

Objectives are measurable initiatives that support the goal. SOC’s shall review each goal and develop 1 or more objectives that will enable employees to reach that goal. Ensure that **each** objective contains language that indicates when the objective will be met and who is responsible.

I Entering Short Goal Descriptions

SOC’s shall provide a brief description of each goal in the limited space provided in OTIS short goal description field. This description will be displayed on the screen when employees select applicable goals.

J Entering Long Goal Descriptions

The OTIS long goal description field allows up to 500 characters to enter a long description of a goal. SOC’s shall ensure that the goal is described in detail for clarity.

K Required Activities

Every SOP must include activities that must be accomplished to meet a specific objective. The activities answer the questions, “what?”, “who?”, “when?”, and “how?”.

L Completing Plan Deadline

SOC’s should have completed FY 2013 SOP entered and certified into OTIS no later than November 2, 2012.

Example SOP With State Goal, Descriptions, and Objectives in OTIS

The following is an example of a complete State Office SOP.

Strategic Outreach Plan**Texas****Fiscal Year 2013****Statement of Purpose**

Texas's Farm Service Agency (FSA) approach to outreach is customer driven. The principle objective is to achieve measurable results in our strategic planning through a process that will be aimed at accomplishing maximum participation and mutual assistance by each of our 173 Service Centers, when providing assistance in our Commodity and Agricultural Credit programs to an extremely diverse agricultural community that exists throughout the State. Throughout the State, agricultural enterprises are diverse and a wide array of enterprises exist. Our Service Centers must work broadly with agricultural, academic, government, and non-government organizations to assist agricultural producers and promote FSA program participation.

Vision Statement

Deliver FSA programs in a manner that will increase the levels of participation by our Underserved, Limited Resource, Minority, Small Farmers and Ranchers, Disabled, and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and deliver those services in a manner that increases customer satisfaction, timeliness, efficiency, and teamwork. Incorporate outreach efforts into our daily business operations by creating a results driven outreach plan which is reflective of the individual demographic needs of all of our customers.

Mission Statement

Texas Farm Service Agency mission is to ensure that we administer as efficiently and equitably to our fellow Texans and to the American public the USDA-FSA agricultural commodity, agricultural credit, conservation, outreach, environmental and emergency assistance programs.

Operating Values

- Improve external customer service.
- Develop a strategic plan reflective of the unique demographic needs of our customers.
- Improve internal customer service.
- Monitor and track progress.
- Provide essential tools and resources to FSA employees.
- Work with professionalism amongst ourselves and with our customers.

Example SOP With State Goal, Descriptions, and Objectives in OTIS (Continued)**Stakeholders**

- Agricultural producers
- FSA County Committee
- State Committee members
- FSA Employees
- Local rural populations
- Other Federal, State, and Local government agencies
- Economic development organizations
- Agricultural Organizations of all types
- Trade Associations
- Conservation and Environmental organizations
- Non-profit organizations with interesting interests
- Academic institutions including Texas Agri-Life Extension Service
- Ethnic-based organizations
- Congressional delegations
- FSA National Office management
- U.S. Taxpayers

Stakeholder Expectations

- FSA will deliver its programs to all eligible regions and farmers.
- FSA staff will be creative and proactive.
- FSA is service oriented.
- FSA staff will look for ways to make things happen and not for reasons why things cannot be done.
- FSA will act professionally at all times.
- FSA is staffed with competent employees who are dedicated and who perform their jobs well.
- FSA will minimize bureaucracy and maximize efficiency.
- FSA will maintain objectivity when handling requests for assistance.

Critical Issues

- Leveraging resources with partner organizations to provide program delivery in our 90 targeted counties.
- Reach out to our minority producers who might be interested in participating in our Commodity and Agricultural Credit Program.
- Due to vast areas that the State of Texas encompasses, language barriers and multicultural operating environment can make program delivery much more time consuming than accounted for in standard workload measures.
- Efforts must be made to reach our new immigrant farmers in Texas, especially those who are working outside the traditional mainstream and not farming in our targeted counties.

Example SOP With State Goal, Descriptions, and Objectives in OTIS (Continued)**Goal ID: 1 - National****Short Description**

Market FSA programs to the public and potential producers.

Long Description

Market FSA programs to potential producers and continue to provide timely program information and events to producers. Activities include but are not limited to speaking at meetings, conferences, exhibiting and having a presence at local events and activities - both Ag and non-Ag related.

1) Objective

Publicize FSA programs and contributions to local community.

Goal ID: 2 - National**Short Description**

Conduct collaborative activities with partners to expand reach to underserved audiences.

Long Description

Promote FSA program participation through targeted outreach activities to beginning, underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers through planned collaborations with external and USDA partners that work with those audiences. (Community based organizations, 2501 partners, extension service, grower associations, local groups, USDA agencies).

1) Objective

Identify partnering opportunities with local and State governments that have common purpose or serve target populations.

2) Objective

Develop collaborative outreach activities with non-profit and education institutions to expand FSA program access to SDA groups.

3) Objective

Use USDA grant-funded, community-based organizations to direct targeted customers seeking technical assistance with farm planning and applications.

Example SOP With State Goal, Descriptions, and Objectives in OTIS (Continued)**Goal ID: 3 - National****Short Description**

Promote FSA to media sources.

Long Description

Publicize FSA programs and events through media sources via press releases, newspaper articles, interviews, Success stories, etc. Differs from Goal 1 in that this goal targets media only, not to producers.

1) Objective

Use web-based or electronic formats to inform producers about FSA programs and services.

Goal ID: 4 - National**Short Description**

Improve public awareness and promote diversity of FSA County Committee Election Process.

Long Description

Expand COC outreach on eligibility and functions of FSA's County Committee System to farmers and ranchers to reflect the demographical profile of the farming community within they operate. That includes representation of Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

1) Objective

Promote awareness of COC nomination and election processes to all groups.

Goal ID: 1 - State**Short Description**

Promote MFR participation to minority farmers and ranchers.

Long Description

Increase State's Minority Farm Register participation and GovDelivery audience in efforts to assist in expanding outreach efforts with targeted groups.

1) Objective

Each county will increase State's MFR enrollees by 5% in FY 2013 which increases GovDelivery and Fencepost audience reach. Increased participation in MFR automatically creates increased GovDelivery and Fencepost enrollment, expanding FSA's outreach.