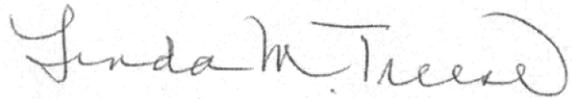


For: State Offices and Service Centers

COC Election Ballot Counting, Organizational Meetings, and LAA Reviews

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

In consideration of FSA’s continuing funding challenges, cost-saving options that have been helpful in the areas of ballot counting and holding organizational meetings continue to be approved.

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
 - completing LAA reviews.

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
May 1, 2013	State Offices; State Offices relay to Service Centers

Notice AO-1554

2 Service Center Action

A Ballot Counting

All COC members are encouraged to be present for ballot counting. 15-AO allows FSA employees to assist with ballot counting when necessary. 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 if either of the following apply:

- a quorum is not available
- COC chooses to conserve resources by not conducting a full COC meeting in December.

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. Because of budget constraints, it may be difficult to hold COC meetings 2 months in a row, December for ballot counting and January for the organizational meeting. This notice allows continuing the practice that allows the organizational meeting to be held immediately following the ballot counting in December, **if** all of the 2013 COC members are present. No other 2013 business may be completed at this meeting.

The organizational meeting minutes **must** comply with the requirements in 15-AO, including becoming page 1 of the 2013 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 2013 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 Completing LAA Reviews

LAA reviews may be completed as early in the year as desired, including immediately following the organizational meeting if held after January 1, 2013. According to 15-AO, paragraph 60, the reviews must be completed by April 1 **and** comply with all other requirements of this paragraph.

D State Office Action

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