

For: FSA Employees

Developing FSA New Employee Training Program

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

FSA management launched an initiative to examine COT and FLOT programs to determine whether there are opportunities to eliminate the duplication in the training programs. COT and FLOT programs address an extensive number of topics that are targeted primarily to CED and FLO positions. While there are a variety of additional resources available to all new employees, there are no established standards requiring their use or ensuring that employees are aware of their availability.

FSA is designing a new training program that focuses initially on the nonprogram-specific similarities of COT, FLOT, or other training programs. The program-specific training currently used for COT's, FLOT's, and PT's will remain intact at this time. The goals and benefits of the redesigned program are to:

- establish alignment with FSA's mission statement in its Strategic Plan to "transform into a more diverse and innovative Agency"
- provide timely and consistent training to all new employees and improve the level of training for all employees
- create an inclusive, high-performance organization
- reduce travel expenses
- encourage interaction between all levels of FSA employees
- eliminate duplicative training and allow more efficient use of limited staff resources.

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

Notice AO-1565

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice announces the:

- initiative to develop the FSA New Employee Training Program
- invitation to State Offices to provide input on the development of this program by:
 - evaluating input received from County Offices, COT trainers, and FLOT trainers
 - submitting training materials they have developed
 - suggesting topics or FSA areas to include in the training
- intent to establish task forces to allow for Field Office representation in the development process.

C Contacts

Direct any question about this notice to 1 of the following:

- Cindy Foister by either of the following:
 - e-mail at **cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-720-7228
- Bill Cobb by either of the following:
 - e-mail at **bill.cobb@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-720-1059
- Teresa Martin by either of the following:
 - e-mail at **teresa.martin@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-690-0431.

Notice AO-1565

2 Submitting Training Materials and Suggested Training Topics

A County Office Action

County Offices, COT trainers, and FLOT trainers should submit their locally developed training materials and suggested topics to their SED, or designee, by April 26, 2013, for consideration.

B State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- review material and suggestions submitted by County Offices, COT trainers, and FLOT trainers
- review State-developed training materials
- submit training materials and suggested training topics to the National Office by May 17, 2013.

Important: The preferred method of submission is electronically.

Training materials shall be submitted to Teresa Martin by 1 of the following:

- e-mail at teresa.martin@wdc.usda.gov
- FAX at 202-690-3573
- UPS/FedEx mailing address.

USDA/FSA/DAFLP/PDEED
Attn: Teresa Martin
Room 3620-S - STOP 0523
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington DC 20250-0520

C National Office (Including APFO, Kansas City, and St. Louis) Action

Submit training materials and suggested topics to Teresa Martin by May 17, 2013, using the methods described in subparagraph B.

Notice AO-1565

3 Establishing Task Forces

A Role of Task Force

The task force will be established to address the topics in Exhibit 1. Employees having knowledge and expertise in these topics will:

- evaluate additional training topics suggested by State Offices
- identify the target audience for each training topic
- recommend the optimal training method for the topic
- assist in developing and reviewing the training.

Task force members will:

- **not** be required to travel since information will be shared, and feedback will be obtained, through teleconferences, video teleconferences, e-mail, or similar resources

Note: Members should be prepared and willing to commit several hours per week during official work hours, for at least the next year, working on the initiative.

- be selected from nominations supplied by National Association of Credit Specialists (NACS), National Association of District Directors (NADD), NASCOE, National Association of Support Employees (NASE), Administrative Officers' Leadership Group (AOLG), SED's, and National Office DAFLP, DAFO, and DAFF.

Employees interested in participating as a task force member should contact their appropriate Association, State, or National Office.

B Nominations by NACS, NADD, NASCOE, NASE, and AOLG

NACS, NADD, NASCOE, NASE, and AOLG may each nominate 2 representatives to serve on the task force to fulfill the roles defined in subparagraph A.

Representatives will serve as the association's liaison, responsible for the following:

- sharing information about the project plan
- providing input and feedback during development
- reporting progress made to association members.

C Nominations by State Offices

SED's may nominate 1 representative to serve on the task force to fulfill the roles defined in subparagraph A. Approximately 6 to 8 task force members will be selected from SED nominations, based on their areas of expertise.

Notice AO-1565

3 Establishing Task Forces (Continued)

D Nominations by National Office

DAFLP, DAFO, and DAFP shall each nominate 2 Field Office representatives to serve on the task force to fulfill the roles defined in subparagraph A.

E Submitting Nominations

Task force nominees should have extensive knowledge of, or experience with, the specific topics listed in Exhibit 1. Prior experience as a trainer may also be beneficial.

Nominations for task force representatives will be submitted by completing the FSA New Employee Training Program Initiative Task Force Nomination Form (Exhibit 2).

NACS, NADD, NASCOE, NASE, and AOLG along with SED's shall submit Exhibit 2 for their nominations to DAFO, attention Cindy Foister, by May 3, 2013, by either of the following:

- e-mail at cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov
- FAX at 202-260-8720.

FSA New Employee Training Topics

The nonprogram-specific topics that will be addressed by this initiative include, but are not limited to, the following:

- FSA History
- USDA Organizational Structure
- FSA Organizational Structure
- St. Louis Organizational Structure
- Kansas City Organizational Structure
- Salt Lake City Organizational Structure
- Overview of Farm Loan Programs
- Overview of Farm Programs
- Overview of DAFO
- State and County Organization and Administration
- Assignment and Joint Payment System
- Audits and Investigations
- Automation Tools Including Outlook and Outlook Calendar
- Civil Rights
- Common Management and Operating Provisions
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution Tools
- Directives and Forms Management and Kansas City Warehouse
- EEO
- Employee Benefits
- Employee Development and Training (Individual Development Plan)
- Employee Performance Management Program
- Federal Register Training
- FFIS Budget and Accounting Codes
- Payment Eligibility, Payment Limitation, and Average Adjusted Gross Income
- Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Provisions
- Information Available to the Public From USDA Web Site
- Information Systems Security Programs
- Knowing and Understanding AgLearn
- Knowing and Understanding Handbooks and Guides
- Leave Administration and Alternative Work Schedules
- Marketing and Outreach
- New Employee Ethics Orientation
- Official Travel
- Performance and Conduct
- Personnel Issues
- Program Appeals and Mediation (FOIA/Privacy Act/Privacy Act Appeals/Litigation)
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Reports
- Security and Emergency Management (Emergency Preparedness/LincPass/Office Security)
- State and County Office Records Operation
- Time and Attendance.

Example of FSA New Employee Training Program Initiative Task Force Nomination Form

Note: Exhibit 2 is available in a fillable format at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov>. CLICK “FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Site” and CLICK “Find Current Forms Using Our Form Number Search”. For “Form Number”, ENTER “Notice AO-1565 Exhibit 2”.

FSA New Employee Training Program Initiative Task Force Nomination Form				
Employee interested in participating as a task force member should contact their appropriate Association, State or National Office.				
1. Nominee Name	2. Position	Location		5. Nominated by: <i>(Enter SED, NACS, NADD, NASCOE, NASE, National Office DAFLP, DAFO, or DAFP)</i>
		3. State Office Name or Enter “National Office”	4. Service Center Name or Enter “National Office”	
6. Nominee Email Address			7. Nominee Contact Phone Number (Area Code)	
8. List areas of expertise and/or training development experience:				
CONCURRENCES - Complete only Item 9, 10, or 11. (National office will obtain SED concurrence for Association nominations):				
9A. Association President Name and Signature		9B. Telephone No. (Area Code)		9C. Date
10A. SED Signature		10B. Telephone No. (Area Code)		10C. Date
11A. Signature of National Office	11B. Title <i>(Enter DAFO, DAFLP or DAFP)</i>	11C. Telephone No. (Area Code)	11D. Date	
<small>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, write to the address below or if you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).</small>				
<small>If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</small>				