

For: State and County Offices

Preparing County and State 2018 Strategic Outreach Plans

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

Program 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 aligned with FSA’s Strategic Plan enhances FSA’s ability to plan, implement, track, and evaluate annual outreach efforts that align with the Agency’s goals. Each State is required to have an annual SOP in OTIS and an operational plan on file in the outreach folder “OUTR 3”, according to the 32-AS supplement: File Maintenance and Disposition Manual.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- FSA outreach mission, vision and operating values to include in FY 2018 State SOP’s
- national goals that support the Agency’s and Department’s strategic plans
- guidance to assist State Offices with developing FY 2018 SOP’s
- the deadline for FY 2018 SOP’s to be entered and certified in OTIS
- employee responsibilities to achieve FY 2018 outreach goals.

C Contacts

If there are questions about this notice, State Offices shall contact the Outreach Division by either of the following:

- e-mail to fsaoutreach@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-690-1700.

If there any questions about this notice, County Offices shall contact the State Office Outreach Coordinator (SOOC).

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2018	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Established SOP Elements

A Outreach Program Statement of Purpose, Vision, Mission and Operating Values

All States **must** use the following established outreach statement of purpose, vision, mission statements and operating values in the state's FY 2018 SOP.

- **Statement of Purpose**

“FSA outreach activities are national, State and County Office informational and educational efforts for promoting FSA, and the benefits of participating in FSA programs, directed to non-participating but potentially eligible persons.”

- **FSA Outreach Vision Statement**

“To become the model for USDA program education, stakeholder engagement and customer service delivery by passionately connecting people to the Ag resources they need.”

- **Outreach Program Mission Statement**

“Our mission is to conduct innovative FSA marketing methods that:

- educate the public of FSA programs and services
- eliminate informational barriers for farmers and ranchers
- increase program participation from potential and current agricultural producers, including underserved communities”.

- **Operating Values**

- Commitment to customer service
- Commitment to quality and innovation
- Respect for individuals
- Importance of honesty, integrity, fairness and ethical standards
- Duty to stakeholders and cooperation with partners.

3 Developing SOP Elements

A Coordination to Develop Plan

The SED, SOC, FLP Chief, FP Chief, Communications Coordinator, and DD's shall work together to establish an annual plan that includes the following:

- operating values
- listing of stakeholders
- listing of all COOC's in the State
- State-specific critical issues and goals.

B Identifying Stakeholders

Stakeholders normally include individuals, groups, private and public organizations, and local and State government agencies that have an interest in the availability and delivery of USDA programs or services. Stakeholder organizations often have shared customer segments, resources, and/or expertise that benefit the Ag community. Examples of stakeholders include the following:

- farmers and ranchers
- land grants and institutions of higher education
- nonprofit community-based organizations
- agricultural associations and organizations
- financial lenders
- other USDA and Federal agencies
- COC and STC members
- tribal, State, and local government entities.

C Identifying Critical Issues

States shall identify issues that may affect FSA's ability to deliver FSA programs and accomplish the mission. List no more than 3 critical issues. Examples of critical issues include the following:

- cultural understanding and differences
- program limitations
- language barriers
- program limitations
- insufficient budgets.

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3 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

D National Goals

In FY 2018, national outreach goals were established based on **FSA’s Strategic Plan goals for FY 2016-18**. These goals also support 5 of the 7 USDA Strategic Goals. The following 5 national outreach goals have been loaded into OTIS for all States to adopt. Effective November 13, 2017, employees may begin entering planned FY 2018 activities into the system.

Goal	Description
1	<p>Market farm loans & farm programs to underserved farmers/ranchers to increase program participation.</p> <p>Overall national objectives for this goal are to: 1) provide access to capital through FSA loans 2) support economic viability through farm programs.</p> <p>Example of outreach activity: Host “M&M” – Microloan Meetings with tribal producers about farm loan & FSFL microloans.</p> <p>This goal supports FSA’s 2016-18 FSA Strategic Plan, Goal #1, Objectives 1.1 & 1.2.</p>
2	<p>Conduct activities to strengthen stewardship/transition and interest in conservation programs.</p> <p>Example of outreach activity: Participate in a joint informational meeting with NRCS to underserved landowners to promote the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).</p> <p>This goal supports FSA’s 2016-18 Strategic Plan, Goal #2, Objective 2.1 and USDA Strategic Goal #5.</p>
3	<p>Cultivate partnerships with stakeholder organizations to efficiently promote FSA programs.</p> <p>Collaborate with partners to assist with outreach, technical assistance & recruitment in order to provide enhanced customer service.</p> <p>Example of outreach activity: Conduct informational meetings with cooperative agreement partners regarding FSA programs and services.</p> <p>This goal supports FSA’s 2016-18 Strategic Plan, Goal #4, Objective 4.3, Strategies 2 & 3.</p>
4	<p>Improve public awareness, participation and member diversity in FSA COC’s.</p> <p>Goal is to educate producers on the role of COC members and promote participation in the nomination and voting processes.</p> <p>Example of an outreach activity: Host COC info meeting at the farm of an elected or current SDA member.</p>
5	<p>Build youth awareness of agriculture, youth loans, and USDA student/career opportunities.</p> <p>Support the next generation of farmers and ranchers by aggressively educating local youth.</p> <p>Example of an outreach activity: Host field day with kids by collaborating with NRCS and partner organizations.</p>

3 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

E Developing State Goals

A goal is a statement of intention for a specific aspect of outreach. In developing State goals SOC’s shall review critical issues listed in SOP and ask what has to be done to meet the challenge of the issue. State Offices may add 1 additional goal to the FY 2018 Plan. The 5 national goals are required.

F Developing Objectives

Objectives are measurable initiatives that support the goal. State Offices shall review each goal and develop 1 or more objectives that will enable State and County Office employees to reach that goal. Ensure that each objective contains measures and includes who is responsible.

G Strategic Plan Activity Worksheet

In OTIS, outreach strategies to meet defined objectives are executed through planned activities. States and counties should plan and adopt local strategies to accomplish the goals as it relates to that office location and the farming demographic identified by the 2012 NASS Agricultural Census. A State planning template has been provided as an aid for State Offices developing state-specific objectives for each national goal. The template is located on the Outreach SharePoint Site at <https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/FSA-DAFO/Outreach/SitePages/Home.aspx> under “Shared Documents”.

Once the SOP planning team establishes objectives for each goal, SOC’s will enter the objectives into OTIS. Once approved, counties will be able to enter planned activities that support the State objectives for each goal.

Note: SOC’s should retain a copy of the template on file along with a copy of the final SOP. Only strategies should be included on the worksheet, as activities will be loaded into OTIS.

The following is an example of a State Office Worksheet goal.

Note: State Office must have a minimum of 1 objective per goal, but may have several.

NATIONAL GOAL	STATE OBJECTIVE	STATE’S STRATEGY TO SUPPORT GOAL/OBJECTIVE	STO EVALUATION METHOD
#5 Build youth awareness of Agriculture, youth loans and USDA student/career opportunities.	<i>Objective 1: STO: Increase number of youth loans in State by 2% in FY 2018 through targeted youth outreach campaigns.</i>	<i>STO: Require COFs to conduct at least one field day during FY.</i>	<i>Evaluate each county’s activity results in OTIS and at the end of the year.</i>

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4 Preparing and Monitoring SOP's

A Entering SOP in OTIS

Once the SOC, CC, FLP and FP Chiefs have developed objectives for the plan, SOC's shall enter the plan and State Office planned activities into OTIS.

SOP's shall include specific activities for each identified objective developed. Activities answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how.

Once entered, a copy of the SOP with the Partner Listing, (from OTIS) COOC Listing (from OTIS) and Strategy Worksheet should be provided to SED for review and approval. Once approved by SED the plan will be certified in OTIS by SOC and await approval from the National Office.

B SED Action

SED's shall ensure that:

- SOC's enter and certify the FY 2018 SOP in OTIS for National Office approval by the **December 1, 2017**, deadline
- all County Office employees are notified by memo and provided a copy of the State SOP
- STC receives a copy of the final State SOP.

C SOC Action

SOC's shall:

- access OTIS from the FSA Intranet Applications page at **<http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/applications.asp>** and login using eAuthentication credentials
- on the Home Page, CLICK **“Write and Certify your Strategic Outreach Plan”**
- CLICK **“Add plan for FY 2018”** to enter State-specific information in all fields according to paragraph 3
- print a copy of the plan, listing of partners, listing of COOC's from OTIS for SED to review and approve
- enter **and certify** SOP in OTIS no later than **December 1, 2017**
- work with State Office specialists and DD's to ensure all planned State FSA program, loan, and recruitment outreach activities are entered into OTIS
- provide quarterly reports to SED reporting County Offices' accomplishments toward achieving State goals.

4 Preparing and Monitoring SOP's (Continued)

D DD Action

DD's shall:

- ensure all counties receive the SED memo advising completion of the State's FY 2018 plan
- encourage all managers to review with their county-assigned COOC and staff
- monitor and review county outreach activities in the district quarterly for performance measures and provide recommendations to enhance SOP implementation.

E COOC Action

COOC's shall:

- review State SOP with County Office staff and print a copy for the County Office file and file under "OUTR 3", according to the 32-AS supplement: File Maintenance and Disposition Manual
- work with local FLP and FP staff to develop county-specific planned activities that support the State objectives
- provide OTIS access to all employees in the county to record farm program and farm loan outreach activities in OTIS that align with SOP
- ensure that all eligible activities conducted by farm program and farm loan staff are entered correctly into OTIS to support FY 2018 SOP
- provide quarterly reports to the supervisor reporting the county's accomplishments toward achieving State goals.