

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

**Notice AO-1735**

**For:** State and County Offices

**Outreach Tracking and Information System (OTIS) Changes;  
FY 2019 State Outreach Plan (SOP) Closeout Actions and FY 2020 Goals**

**Approved by:** Administrator



---

## 1 Overview

### A Background

OTIS is a software application that supports outreach reporting requirements for National, State, and County Office employees. FSA program outreach activities are required to be entered into OTIS by all County and State Offices. State Outreach Coordinators (SOC's) are required annually to closeout FY activities by ensuring that all activities and results have been entered and certified.

### B Purpose

This notice provides State and County Offices with information about:

- recent changes to OTIS version 3.6.3.1
- the deadline for County Offices to enter all activity results of FY 2019 activities
- FY 2019 SOP closeout and evaluation actions required by SOC's
- FY 2020 SOP goals.

### C Contact

If there are questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact the applicable SOC
- State Offices shall contact Sharon Hayden, Outreach Program Analyst, by either of the following:
  - e-mail to **fsaoutreach@usda.gov**
  - telephone at 202-690-1700.

---

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2020 9-26-19	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice AO-1735

### 2 OTIS

#### A System Changes

The following table provides changes and additions to the OTIS.

Description	Change/Addition
Added new 2018 Farm Bill program categories.	DMC, WHIP+, LGM, MFP, PL, Farm Bill Info
Replaced EMSO Contact information with CEC Help Desk Contact information on Contact Us and all pages of the application.	CEC Help Desk for technical assistance: 877-873-0783.
Updated REG requirement under optional Demographic Profile of Activity Page	Race, Ethnicity and Gender (REG) data should only be entered if voluntarily provided by a producer on an event sign-in sheet retained in office files.
Replaced 2012 Ag Census County Profile Statistics Report with 2017 Ag Census Profile Statistics Report	<b>Pending</b> NASS report release date October 2019.

#### B OTIS FY Closeout Processing Deadline

All FY 2019 outreach activities and results must be entered in OTIS by COB **September 30, 2019**.

**Notes:** County Office Outreach Coordinators (COOC's) shall review OTIS and ensure that actual results have been entered for all county OTIS activities.

SOC's shall ensure the review by COOC's has been completed. Any approved activity without results entered will be removed from the system by the SOC.

SOC's must ensure that the SOP is closed out in OTIS by **October 2, 2019**.

#### C OTIS and SOP Evaluation Closeout Actions

COOC's shall:

- ensure all eligible FY 2019 outreach activities with results have been recorded for the County Office by **September 30, 2019**
- save then print Ad Hoc report of all completed outreach activity conducted by the County Office for FY 2019, attach to FY 2019 SOP and file in OUTR-3 files according to 32-AS.

**2 OTIS (Continued)**

**C OTIS and SOP Evaluation Closeout Actions (Continued)**

SOC's shall:

- delete all incomplete county activities (those without actual results recorded) in OTIS
- approve all activities with results in OTIS by **October 2, 2019**
- close out the FY19 SOP in OTIS as outlined in the OTIS Manual by **October 2, 2019**
- save and print Ad Hoc report of all completed activities and attach to State SOP
- meet with SED and strategies team that developed State SOP objectives and review State accomplishments to determine if objectives were met and identify areas of achievement and needed improvement
- provide SED and DD's with listing of counties who submitted incomplete and/or had few outreach activities in FY 2019 along with the strategies team's recommendations for outreach improvement by counties.
- provide National Office with copy of State objective accomplishments by goal along with a copy of team recommendations for outreach improvement by counties **no later than October 25, 2019**
- file SOP and activity report attachment in OUTR-3 files.

**Note:** Employees shall not enter FY 2020 outreach activities OTIS for FY 2020 until **all States** have completed the FY 2019 closeout and SOC's have created and certified their FY 2020 plans.

**D FY 2020 SOP Goals**

SOC's shall lead State strategies team in developing objectives and strategies for FY 2020 SOP that counties may support through outreach activities. SOC's shall follow the implementation guidelines in 22-AO, subparagraph 22 I to develop and certify their plans for national approval.

## Notice AO-1735

### 2 OTIS (Continued)

#### D FY 2020 SOP Goals (Continued)

The following table provides the FY 2020 OTIS goals developed by the National Office.

Goal	OTIS Short Description	Long Description	Sample State Objective
1	Conduct Direct/Guaranteed loan and servicing program outreach to increase awareness and participation.	<p><b>Agency Goal:</b> Provide access to capital through FSA loans. This goal supports FSA 2016 - 18 Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.1 and USDA 2018 - 2022 Strategic Plan Goal 2.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Host FSA Loans Workshop. Explain eligibility, application forms and future borrower responsibilities.</p>	Increase awareness on loan programs, particularly Microloans and Guaranteed FO's, in an effort to increase applications with beginning farmers, and military veterans by 2 percent throughout the State in FY 2020.
2	Conduct activities to strengthen transitions/land stewardship through conservation/energy programs.	<p><b>Agency Goal:</b> Provide Resource Stewardship Opportunities on Private Lands. Support FSA's 2016 - 2018 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective. 2.1 and USDA 2018-2022 Strategic Plan Goal 5.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Make presentation to landowners on transferring CRP into the Transition Incentives Program (TIP).</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Participate in joint informational meeting with NRCS to discuss CRP/ Farmable Wetlands Program.</p>	Host and present at 2 meetings per district to reach at least 50 producers statewide of TIP education.

## Notice AO-1735

### 2 OTIS (Continued)

#### D FY 2020 SOP Goals (Continued)

Goal	OTIS Short Description	Long Description	Sample State Objective
3	Conduct targeted meetings with underserved communities to provide awareness of FSA loans/programs.	<p><b>Agency Strategies:</b> Increased Lending to Beginning and Underserved Farmers and Ranchers/Support Economic Viability and Increase Program Participation.</p> <p>FSA Underserved Audiences Include: Ethnic Minorities, Women, Youth, Beginning Farmers/Ranchers, Urban and Organic Producers.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Make an FSA presentation at the Black Growers Association meeting about FSA programs.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Partner with women in agriculture organization to host info meeting.</p>	State will strive to increase underserved participation in programs by 2 percent through a minimum of 35 meetings held across the State with underserved organizations on FSA programs and services.
4	Improve public awareness, participation and member diversity in FSA's County Committees.	Host informational meetings that explain the role of COC's, nomination periods and elections. Targeted outreach required for underserved audiences which includes beginning farmers.	State will increase COC member diversity by 1 percent through targeted outreach activities.

## Notice AO-1735

### 2 OTIS (Continued)

#### D FY 2020 SOP Goals (Continued)

Goal	OTIS Short Description	Long Description	Sample State Objective
5	Conduct outreach on commodity/facility loans, risk programs, disaster and special farm programs.	<p><b>Agency Purpose:</b> Expand marketing opportunities through on-farm storage/support economic viability/increase program participation.</p> <p>Host informational sessions on commodity loans, Organic Cost share certification program, ARC/PLC, DMC, ECP, NAP, EFCRP, LIP, ELAP, WHIP+, Market Facilitation Program/ Geographically Disadvantaged Farmer Program and all other farm programs.</p>	State will conduct informational meetings on FSA programs to increase WHIP+ and FSFL participation by 2 percent respectively.
6	Build youth awareness of agriculture, youth loans and USDA student/career opportunities.	<p>Support the next generation of farmers, ranchers, USDA employees by aggressively educating local youth and working with youth organizations such as 4H and FFA.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Speak to an agricultural economics class at local college or university about agriculture and agriculture careers.</p> <p><b>Sample Activity:</b> Plan youth outreach meeting with assistance of youth loan borrowers, FFA, and 4H students who have benefitted from youth loan.</p>	State will strengthen the State's youth loan program by conducting 12 field days with FFA and other partner organizations to encourage youth loan participation.