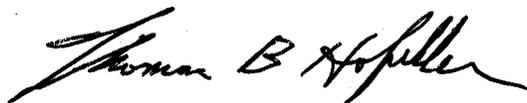


For: State Offices

National Target Reviews Using Statistical Sampling

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The County Operations Review Program (CORP) was implemented in 1986 as a National internal management control program to identify nationwide operational deficiencies. In the majority of CORP reviews, the scope of the review and the counties to be reviewed is determined by SED. Although the records within the counties are randomly selected, the results obtained are only representative of the respective operation reviewed in the county and the results have no valid nationwide implications. Even the few National target reviews conducted, counties were selected using equal probability sampling which generally leads to a significant increase in sample errors when compared to proportional probability sampling.

To establish the methodology to conduct National target reviews based on sound statistical methods, the Operations Review and Analysis Staff (ORAS) will conduct a series of special National target reviews.

B Purpose

This notice provides an overview of how upcoming National target reviews will be conducted using sound statistical sampling methods.

<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>April 1, 2006</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>State Offices; State Offices relay to CORP Coordinators and COR's</p>
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2 Statistical Sampling

A Statistical Techniques

Based on the scope of the review to be conducted, counties and individual records will be selected using 1 or more scientifically sound statistical methods.

B Use of Statistician

The sampling will be determined by an experienced survey statistician who is under contract by FSA.

3 Scope of Reviews

A Operations to be Reviewed

National reviews will focus on programs or administrative operations that are applicable to the majority of the County Offices in the 48 contiguous States. ORAS will determine which programs will be reviewed.

B Verification Items

ORAS, in consultation with program managers, will determine the verification items for each review.

4 County Operations Review (COR) Assignments

A ORAS Assignments

Since counties are statistically selected, there is an uneven distribution of counties geographically. Some COR's may either:

- **not** be assigned a review
- be assigned counties in other States.

ORAS shall be responsible for determining which COR's are assigned to conduct the applicable reviews considering travel distances and expenses. ORAS will notify COR and the CORP Coordinator of the assignments. Every attempt will be made to assign COR's to the selected office nearest the COR's headquarters to conduct the review.

B Priority

National target reviews take priority over any previously assigned review.

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4 County Operations Review (COR) Assignments (Continued)

C Travel Requirements and Costs

It is possible that COR's will be reviewing counties outside of their assigned States. For the majority of reviews, COR's will be assigned to counties within their normal expected travel distances, but not necessarily their assigned States. However, COR's may incur travel expenses such as airfare and car rental that are not considered normal.

If COR's travel is extended to other State Offices, then travel for Federal State Office participants shall be charged to Washington-controlled State travel funds.

5 Reporting Review Results

A SCORP Software and Excel Spreadsheets

COR's shall document the review using the SCORP software in the normal manner, including making recommendations. In addition, COR's shall be required to enter data into an Excel spreadsheet to be provided by ORAS which will allow the statistician to facilitate statistical estimates.

The Excel spreadsheet and instructions will be provided to COR's at a later date.

6 Modification of Samples

A Changes to Sample

For reviews to be statistically sound, no changes in selection of counties or records to be reviewed will be allowed. It is possible that a selected county in the review may have already been reviewed for the applicable program, but for the purposes of these reviews, the select county must be reviewed again.

B Expanding Samples

Records to be reviewed will be provided to COR and samples will not be expanded.

7 Timeframes

A When will Reviews be Conducted

ORAS anticipates that the reviews will:

- begin in April 2005
- be completed by the end of June 2005.

B Length of Reviews

ORAS will design reviews to allow each review to be completed in less than 5 workdays.