

For: FSA Employees

Electronic Forms (eForms) Processing

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

eFiling is part of the Federal Government’s initiative, called eGovernment or eGov, to streamline operations and increase efficiency through the use of computers and the World Wide Web (www). The Government Paperwork Elimination Act required that, by October 21, 2003, all Federal departments provide individuals or entities the option to submit information, transact business, and maintain records online.

eFiling allows registered customers to fill out and submit forms or applications electronically (eForms). Many forms can be completed and submitted online, but some must be printed, signed by hand in ink, and submitted to the local USDA Service Center by mail or FAX.

B Purpose

This notice:

- explains the eFiling process
- identifies eFiling resources
- provides eFiling guidance.

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1 Overview (Continued)

C Contacts

If additional information is needed, contact the appropriate office as follows.

Employee Location	Contact
County and State Office	State eGov Coordinator
National Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For this notice, Ragh Singh at 202-720-7094.• For SCIMS, Sandy Bryant at 202-720-3464.• For eFiling Guaranteed Loan Program, Pat Elzinga at 202-690-1729.

2 eAuthentication Registration Process

A Obtaining eAuthentication Registration

Notices AO-1292 and IRM-347 provided information on the eAuthentication registration process.

The first step in the eFiling process is for the customer/lender to obtain an eAuthentication user ID and password. This process is explained in Notice AO-1292.

Notice IRM-347 announced that the term “WebCAAF” is replaced with the term “eAuthentication”.

B Linking SCIMS to eAuthentication Record

Notice AO-1295 provides information on the SCIMS (IDLMS) linking process.

It is imperative that customers wanting to do business with FSA and NRCS:

- be loaded into the SCIMS system
- have their SCIMS record linked to their eAuthentication record. Follow Notice AO-1295 to complete the SCIMS linking process.

C Important FLP SCIMS Sticky Note

When entering a **bank loan official** in SCIMS for the purpose of eFiling, use the loan official’s Social Security number and home address, **not** the lender’s. In the Customer Notes section in SCIMS, select “Sticky Note”, and type in the following: “This person is a Loan Officer for [name of lender] and [bank branch]”.

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2 eAuthentication Registration Process (Continued)

C Important FLP SCIMS Sticky Note (Continued)

This is important information for FLP. Loan officials may already be in the SCIMS system with their own Social Security number if they own or operate land and you do not create a duplicate record.

Notice CM-491 provides information on the SCIMS View Only Access application.

3 Submitting, Receiving, and Processing Electronic Forms

A Submitting eForms to Service Centers

After customers/lenders have set up their eAuthentication user ID and password, they can begin to submit packages (1 form or a group of forms) to USDA Service Centers.

Web site <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet> provides useful site demonstrations and general eForms information.

Note: The first page of the eForms web site explains that anyone may browse, fill in, and print any of the public forms available by clicking the “Browse Forms” button. However, if customers want to submit these completed forms online, then they must have an eAuthentication user ID and password.

B Submitting Forms

Customers can submit forms as a package to the Service Center of their choice. A package may include a single form or several forms. Packages may also include attachments. Attachments are other files or scanned documents that the customer may want or need to submit with their forms. Attachments could be a part of a lender’s package when submitting a complete loan package.

Unique, computer generated, confirmation numbers are assigned to every package that is submitted. Customers can track the status of their package from the time of online submission up to the time a Service Center employee prints the forms.

All forms:

- are identified by their form number
- include a short description
- have an instruction page.

When a customer selects “Instructions”, the instructions for completing the form are displayed. The customer should **print** the instructions and then must click on “Close Window” to close the browser.

3 Submitting, Receiving, and Processing Electronic Forms (Continued)

B Submitting Forms (Continued)

After printing out the instructions, the customer can click on the form's number to pull up the form, complete it, and print it. All forms are fillable and Section 508 compliant. Forms can be read correctly for a visually-impaired customer.

Customers can complete, save, close, or submit forms they complete. The save option **does not** save the form to the customer's PC. It is saved to the eForms Central Web Server and can only be accessed by the customer.

Customers will click the "Submit" button to send completed forms and attachments to the Service Center they choose. The "Submit" function works with the Office Information Profile (OIP) data. The customer is directed to a map of the United States. The customer then clicks on the "State" and the "County" where they want the forms to be sent.

After selecting the Service Center, the customer can attach additional forms, enter comments, and provide their e-mail address. The customer's e-mail address is not required but will greatly improve servicing.

A screen is displayed asking the customer to confirm their desire to submit their information to a Service Center for processing and to attest that the information is correct. Forms and attachments sent together are sent to the Service Center as 1 package. The package can include 1 form or several forms and attachments. The customer cannot modify a package once it has been submitted.

C Receiving eForms Packages

When customers submit packages, all employees in that office will receive an e-mail stating that a package has been submitted and to check the eForms Work Queue at <https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

Some offices will **not** receive e-mail notification of eForms packages because their e-mail has been rehosted. These counties must access the <https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov> web site daily to check for eForms packages. Office managers must designate 1 person to check the eForms Work Queue daily.

D Checking the eForms Web Site for Packages

The eForms Servicing web page will come up when employees access web site <https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov> and enter their eAuthentication login and password. This is the web site employees will access to check the eForms Work Queue. The Work Queue will show forms or packages sent to their Service Center. Everyone identified as a specific Agency employee in an office can access all items sent to that office.

3 Submitting, Receiving, and Processing Electronic Forms (Continued)

D Checking the eForms Web Site for Packages (Continued)

Web site <https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov> includes a User Guide, Training Guide, Help, Contact Us, and FAQ's.

Before a package can be **Accepted, Redirected, or Returned**, the forms must be accessed, printed, and reviewed for completeness. A Confirmation Number, Customer Name, and Date will print on the forms. Service Center employees will not be able to modify any information on the submitted forms. Packages will move to **Pending** after documents have been accessed for review.

E Accepting Packages

After reviewing the customer's package and verifying that the forms are completed correctly, the package should be accepted by clicking on the "Accept" button by that specific package.

Accepting a package does not mean the customer is approved or eligible to receive any assistance. It only means complete information has been provided to the FSA office and processing of the request can begin.

Accepted packages are moved to the Accepted folder in the eForms Work Queue.

FSA employees shall redirect packages that have been submitted to the wrong USDA Service Center Office. To **redirect** a package, pull up the appropriate customer and package and click the "Redirect" button. When redirecting a package, select the correct Service Center and enter a reason for the redirection.

F Returning Packages

FSA employees must return packages when the customer has not filled out a form correctly or completely. To **return** a package, pull up the appropriate customer and package and click the "Return" button. The FSA employee returning the package must explain in detail the reason the package is being returned and provide their name, Agency, and telephone number.

G Upcoming Feature - Employees Creating Packages

Coming soon is a feature to allow employees to complete forms with Agency information and send the forms to customers using a SCIMS interface to select the customer they would like to send the package to. When the customer receives the package, they would enter their customer specific information and send the package back to the Service Center.

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4 Online Reports

A Service Center Reports

Each Service Center can view 4 online reports to monitor and track eForms activity.

Online Report	eForms Activity
Volume Statistics	All eForms activity for the office.
Open Items	All packages sent to your Service Center that still need to be accepted, redirected, or returned.
Processing Statistics	The average length of time a package is opened in the queue.
Redirect Statistics	How many customers are being redirected and how often.

5 General eFiling Policies

A Electronic Signature

Documents submitted through the eForms service have been “Electronically Signed” and no other signature is required. For most programs, eForms have the same validity as manually signed forms.

Note: FLP Guarantees: The eFiling system does **not** accommodate 2 electronic signatures. For forms that require the loan officer’s signature and the borrower’s signature, the loan officer’s signature is electronic, and the lender must also submit a “hard copy” of the application with the borrower’s signature before FSA issues a loan guarantee as required by 2-FLP, subparagraphs 69.5 B, 70 A, and 73 B.

When a forms package is received through the eForms service, the documents included in the package must be processed in the traditional manual/legacy manner and handled according to program regulations.

B eForms Listing

Employees can access and print a list of FSA forms that may be accepted for electronic signature from the FSA Employee Forms Intranet web site at <http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

5 General eFiling Policies (Continued)

B eForms Listing (Continued)

To view or print the list, do the following.

Step	Action
1	Select “Yes” from the dropdown box next to the “Electronic Signature Accepted” text.
2	Leave all other fields blank. Select “Submit”.
3	The list that follows displays forms that are or will be on the site and are approved for electronic signature.
4	To print the list, select “File” from the browser menu, then select “Print”.

6 State and County Office Action

A State Office Action

Each SED shall appoint a State eGov Coordinator. State eGov Coordinators must:

- monitor status of the eForms service weekly to ensure packages are processed in a timely manner
- train new employees in the use of eForms.

Note: The State eGov Coordinator can monitor eForms activity for the entire State, county by county.

B County Office Action

County Offices must:

- be familiar with the eForms customer process
- access the eForms Work Queue once every business day
- review each item in a package for completeness and determine the next appropriate action
- print all forms and attachments included in the eForms package

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6 State and County Office Action (Continued)

B County Office Action (Continued)

- process Accepted forms in the traditional manner and according to Agency policy for that program
- if the correct office cannot be found in eForms when redirecting a package, FAX or mail a printed copy of the forms to the correct location
- safeguard customers' eAuthentication user ID's and passwords.

7 Quick References

A Quick Reference Guide

Following is a list of quick reference guides and where to find them.

What	Where to Find It
eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide Updated July 18, 2002	http://www.info.usda.gov/egovtraining/
Check the Work Queue for eForms packages and view online reports	https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov
eForms web site (find, complete, submit eForms) Good site demonstration here	http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet
LRA training	http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov Click on "LRA Login".
Customer access to sign up for Level 2 account	http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/#L2 Click on "Create An Account".
LRA takes customer to Level 2 after identity proofing	http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov and Notice AO-1292
Complete SCIMS linking process	https://scimslinkmgr.sc.egov.usda.gov and Notice AO-1295
Reset eAuthentication password FSA Security Help Desk	800-255-2434 Option 5 or eauthhelpdesk@itc.nrcs.usda.gov
USDA Customer Statement	http://CustomerStatement.usda.gov
USDA Customer Statement Demo	http://customerstatement.usda.gov/Demo/