



2023 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Open This Week

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Rhode Island

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 6, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin mailing ballots this week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county and urban county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas for these committee members who make important decisions about how Federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots postmarked by Dec. 4, 2023, for those ballots to be counted.

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"County committees provide an opportunity for producers to play a meaningful role in delivering farm programs. In order for county committees to be effective, they must truly represent all who are producing," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "Voting in these elections is your opportunity to help ensure our county committees reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. If you receive a ballot in the mail, I hope you'll take a few minutes to cast your vote, drop it in the mail or return it to your local office. Your voice and vote matter."

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Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age, but supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm, are eligible to vote in these elections.

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For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian Tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned or held in trust by the U.S. for the Tribe, even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land. Tribal agricultural landowners 18 years and older can contact their local FSA county office to register to vote.

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing a Local Administrative Area is up for election each year. Committee members help ensure inclusive representation on committees and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their jurisdiction. Based on stakeholder feedback, over the past year FSA has worked to reimagine county committees to be more diverse and more representative of the communities they serve. Some efforts include the Secretarial appointment of 93 minority members to committees lacking adequate representation and the digitization of maps for producers to easily identify their Local Administrative Area. This tool can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Ballots must be postmarked or delivered in person by close of business Dec. 4, 2023, to be counted. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024. Producers can find out if their Local Administrative Area is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from their local FSA county office.

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Urban County Committees??

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Urban county committees have or will be established in 27 cities to strengthen administration of FSA programs in urban areas. Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs, serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

A list of the 27 cities with urban county committees can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections. While most of the urban locations will be holding elections this year, some will follow a unique election schedule that will be announced in the future. Urban producers in these areas can contact their local FSA office now to register as an eligible voter and learn more.

More Information??

Visit fsa.usda.gov/elections for more information on county committee elections. ?

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their [local USDA Service Center](#) or their [Urban Service Center](#). Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by logging into their farmers.gov account. Producers who don't have an account can [sign up today](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America and committing to equity across the department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

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