

For: State and County Offices

Preparing FY 2014 State Strategic Outreach Plans (SOP's)

Approved by: 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 National SOP enhances FSA's ability to plan, implement, track, and evaluate annual outreach efforts. Each State is **required** to have an annual SOP loaded into the Outreach Tracking Information System (OTIS) and filed in the Outreach Folder OUTR 3 according to 25-AS.

B Purpose

This notice provides:

- FSA outreach mission and vision statements to include in FY 2014 State SOP's
- guidance to assist State Offices with developing FY 2014 SOP's in OTIS
- that SOP's must be entered into OTIS and certified in OTIS by **November 29, 2013**.

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice:

- County Offices shall contact State Offices
- State Offices shall contact State-assigned National Office outreach coordinator.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2014	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Developing SOP Elements

A Developing a Statement of Purpose

A statement of purpose defines the vision and mission of the Outreach program in a brief, comprehensive way. A summary of key points and goals and a clear idea of the target audience in that State are essential.

Combine the goals, mission, and vision into a short and memorable statement focused directly at the State's target audience and what sets FSA apart from others.

The following **actual** vision and program mission statements are to assist in creating SOP's:

- **FSA Outreach Vision Statement**

“To become the model for USDA program education and customer service delivery.”

- **Outreach Program Mission Statement**

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

- educate the public of FSA programs/services
- eliminate participation barriers
- increase program participation from potential and current small, beginning, socially disadvantaged, and underserved customers.”

The following **example Statement of Purpose** is to assist in creating SOP's:

“Alabama's FSA Outreach purpose is to deliver, through mutual assistance by each of our 45 Service Centers, FSA programs and activities to all customers and potential customers, including small business, beginning, underserved, and SDA customers. Our objective is to improve communications through FSA program education to eliminate barriers that prevent participation from potential producers in Alabama.”

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

B Develop Operating Values

Operating values, or guiding principles:

- explicitly state FSA's principles and values
- serve as standards for judging both FSA policy and individual conduct
- define FSA's position and serve as a cornerstone for creating cultural awareness.

Topics generally covered by operating values include the following:

- importance of customers and customer service
- commitment to quality and innovation (creating model Service Center delivery)
- respect for all individuals (customers and employees **must** be treated in a fair and equitable manner respecting the rights of all)
- commitment to cultural transformation (value the unique differences and situations of others)
- importance of honesty, integrity, fairness, and ethical standards
- duty to stakeholders
- cooperation with partners.

Compose a series of sentences that express the State's position on each of these topics or any others that SED deems necessary.

C Identifying Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals who have a stake in how well FSA achieves its mission. Stakeholders normally include individuals, groups, private and public organizations, and local and State government agencies that have an interest in USDA products and/or services and how those products and/or services are produced. Examples of stakeholders include the following:

- COC members
- faith-based organizations
- farm workers
- farmer advocates
- farmers and ranchers
- land grant institutions
- nonprofit community-based organizations
- other leaders
- other USDA and Federal agencies
- tribal, State, and local government entities
- unions.

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

D Identifying Stakeholder Expectations

Expectations are things that the stakeholders expect from FSA. Define what each expects from FSA. If stakeholder’s expectations are unknown, ask them. This can be accomplished through direct discussions, interviews, and questionnaires. Examples of expectations include the following:

- consistency
- cooperation and collaboration
- partnership and participation
- program education
- timely information.

E Identifying Critical Issues

The following are example critical issues that may affect FSA’s ability to deliver programs timely and accomplish the mission. List no more than 5 major **critical** issues.

- Cultural understanding and differences.
- Insufficient budgets (mailings, event participation).
- Office closings and staffing deficiencies.
- Program limitations (expired Farm Bill).

F National Goals, Objectives, and Activity Examples

FY 2014 national goals have been loaded into OTIS for all States to adopt. The 5 goals are as follows.

Goal	Description
1	<p>“Market USDA programs, loans, careers, and initiatives to the public and potential customers.</p> <p><i>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2. Objective 4 Pillar 2 (Increase Awareness of FSA Programs and Services).</i></p> <p>Example activities include: Conduct a microloan workshop with a local food hub’s producers; Host a FSFL educational seminar with veterans; Exhibit in the livestock barn at the state fair; Exhibit at local Job Fair to promote FSA Career opportunities.”</p> <p>Note: Additional examples are available on the SharePoint site at https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/mgr/DAFO/Outreach. Under “Shared Documents”, CLICK “Best Practices”.</p>

Notice AO-1584

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

F National Goals, Objectives, and Activity Examples (Continued)

Goal	Description
2	<p>“Encourage farm enrollment and program participation through targeted activities specific to small, beginning, underserved, and/or SDA farmers and ranchers, including farmers and ranchers in persistent poverty counties.</p> <p><i>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 4.2. (Improve outreach efforts to socially disadvantaged farmers).</i></p> <p>Example activities include: Initiate monthly standing “Doing Business with USDA” meetings at local Civic center or library; Host Strike Force meeting with Tribal leaders.”</p> <p>Note: Additional examples are available on the SharePoint site at https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/mgr/DAFO/Outreach. Under “Shared Documents”, CLICK “Best Practices”.</p> <p>When conducting activities to reach target audiences, plan accordingly. Within the targeted groups, discuss programs that are applicable to the group with whom you are speaking.</p> <p>Examples: Discuss NAP with FAV producers and discuss CRP with row crop producers.</p>
3	<p>“Identify, create and cultivate relationships with new and existing Ag partners to improve and expand reach to shared audiences through trainings and collaborative activities.</p> <p><i>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 4.4 Pillar 3 (Improve outreach and program education).</i></p> <p>Example activities include: Host training in State Office with 2501 Partner Organizations; Host meeting with USDA 1890 Program Liaison and Ag Extension Agents to discuss new Farm Bill programs; Conduct limited English proficiency community assessment with Hmong National Development Outreach Specialists.”</p>
4	<p>“Improve public participation and member diversity on FSA County Committees.</p> <p><i>This goal aligns with FSA Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.2 and 7 CFR Part 7 Sec. 7.8.</i></p> <p>Example activities include: COC Power point presentation at local Farm Bureau Young & Beginning Farmers/Rancher Group; Explain COC Eligibility process at Lane County Pastors Association Meeting.”</p>
5	<p>“Promote awareness of Agriculture, Youth Loans, USDA Student Program Opportunities to youth.</p> <p><i>This goal was created to capture FSA activities with youth.</i></p> <p>Example activities include: Speak on Careers in Agriculture at local High School; Power point presentation on youth loans to 4-H members; Discuss FSA Farm Programs and careers with college Ag Econ class.”</p>

2 Developing SOP Elements (Continued)

G Identifying State Goals

A goal is a statement of intentions for a specific aspect of FSA. States have the option to enter a State goal not covered in National goals. SED's should review any critical State-specific issues to determine if an additional goal is needed.

Note: States may add up to 2 additional goals to the required national goals provided.

There are 2 methods of entering goals as follows, for a:

- **short description of a State goal**, provide a brief description of the goal in the limited space provided in the OTIS field

Note: This description will be display on screen when employees select applicable goals.

- **long description of State goal**, the OTIS field allows up to 500 characters to enter a long description of a goal.

Note: Ensure that the goal is described in detail for clarity.

H Identifying Objectives

Objectives are measurable initiatives that support the goal. 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 language that indicates when the objective has been met and who is responsible.

I Identifying Activities

Every SOP contains activities that **must** be accomplished to meet a specific objective. Activities answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how, and specify performance measurement indicators to determine successful completion of the activity to indicate the level or degree of completion. Activities for goals entered in OTIS should:

- link with the goal and objective
- include date, Service Center participating in activity, county location of activity, and number of participants by ethnicity, gender, race, and disability
- includes programs and initiatives discussed at the activity
- include partner organization worked with for activity
- include activity details recorded in the comment field.

Notice AO-1584

3 Entering SOP's

A SED Action

SED's shall ensure that:

- State outreach coordinators (SOC's) enter FY 2014 SOP into OTIS for National Office approval by the **November 29, 2013**, deadline
- County Office outreach coordinators (COOC's) review State completed SOP with County Office staff, print a copy for County Office file in file OUTF 3 according to 25-AS, Exhibit 51.6, and explain to staff the types of activities that are required to be entered
- STC receives copy of final State SOP.

B SOC Action

SOC's shall:

- use eAuthentication credentials to access OTIS at <https://wdcprod80.sc.egov.usda.gov/otis/outreach/home.aspx>
- on the Home Page, CLICK "**Write and Certify your Strategic Outreach Plan**"
- CLICK "**Add plan for FY 2014**"
- enter State specific information in all fields according to paragraph 2
- print a copy for SED to review and approve
- have SOP's entered into **and certified** in OTIS no later than **November 29, 2013**, upon SED's approval.

C COOC Action

COOC's shall:

- review State completed SOP with County Office staff and print a copy for County Office file in file OUTF 3 according to 25-AS, Exhibit 51.6
- review SOP goals with staff and COC members
- explain to staff the types of activities that are required to be entered.

Example State Goal, Descriptions, Objectives, and Activities

The following is an example of a correctly formatted FY 2014 State goal, short and long description, objectives, and activities.

**Strategic Outreach Plan
North Carolina
Fiscal Year 2014**

Goal ID: 1-State Short Description: Promote Minority Farm Register and GovDelivery participation to underserved producers.

Long Description: Conduct increased marketing efforts of USDA's Minority Farm Register (MFR) in persistent poverty counties identified in USDA's Strike Force Initiative. Increased participation in MFR automatically creates increased GovDelivery and Fencepost enrollment, expanding FSA's outreach.

Objectives: Increase State's MFR enrollees by 10% in FY 2014 which increases GovDelivery and Fencepost audience reach.

Activities:

- Encourage MFR enrollment at workshops, field days, and exhibiting events.
- Notify MFR participants of local outreach events and field days.