

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
Supporting Statement
OMB Number 0560-0229**

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide supporting documentation for the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection—County Committee Elections 0560-0229.

Justification:

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

As specified in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, the Secretary prepare a report of election that includes, among other things, "the race, ethnicity and gender of each nominee, as provided through the voluntary self-identification of each nominee" (Page 405, Sec. 10708 (b) para. VI and V ff). This information may be best obtained through a set of questions, through the FSA-669-A, "Nomination Form for County FSA Committee Election". The instructions for completing this part of the form indicate that completion is voluntary, however if it is not completed, FSA will make note of the nominee's race, ethnicity and gender on the basis of visual observation or surname.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose will this information be used?

The data collected on the FSA Nomination Form will be used in the county office for the upcoming County Committee Election.

- Information collected will include; "race, ethnicity and gender of each nominee, as provided through the voluntary self-identification of each nominee"
- The information will be entered into the computer and used by Kansas City in preparation for the upcoming election
- The nominee or the nominator will be allowed to bring the form into the office in person, or the form may be mailed, or submitted electronically.
- The information will be collected annually and be provided to Secretary for review.

In addition, the Secretary maintains and make readily available to the public, via website and otherwise in electronic and paper form, all data required to be collected and computed under section 2501A(c) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, clause (iii)(V) as amended, collected since the most recent Census of Agriculture. After each Census of Agriculture, the Secretary will report to Congress the rate of loss or gain in participation by each socially disadvantaged group, by race, ethnicity, and gender, since the previous Census.

3. Use of Information Technology.

The form is available to the producer electronically at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms>. The nominee or the nominator are allowed to bring the form into the office in person, or the form may be mailed, or submitted electronically by producers who have an electronic signature on file.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

FSA/DAFO is not aware of any form that may duplicate this effort.

5. Methods to minimize burden on small businesses or other small entities.

The collecting of this information is being done only for individuals. It has no impact on small business or other small entities.

6. Consequences if information collection were less frequent.

This information is required to be collected on all nominees for COC. It is only requested when an individual agrees to run for the position. If it were not collected in any given year, the Secretary would not be able to prepare the report that he has been charged with preparing.

7. Special Circumstances.

Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**

The Secretary has also been charged with computing annually the participation rate of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as a percentage of the total participation of all farmers and ranchers for each program of the Department of Agriculture established for farmers or ranchers. Therefore, the respondents may be asked for this information any time they are nominated and accept the nomination.

None of the other special circumstances apply in this case.

8. Federal Register notice, summarization of comments and consultation with persons outside the Agency.

A Federal Register Notice Request for an Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection on and request for comments was published on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 (79 FR 27570). The one comment that was received suggested that the COC election should be paid for by the farmers and not be funded by taxpayers.

The following three non-FSA employee names are provided.

Peter Bussman
PO Box 494
Blue Lake, CA 95525

Joy Harder
16442 NW 20th St.
Benton, KS 67017

Lisa Colby
PO Box 297
Newburyport, MA 01950

The Secretary will compute annually the participation rate of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as a percentage of the total participation of all farmers and ranchers for each program of the Department of Agriculture established for farmers or ranchers.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

No payments or gifts are provided to persons completing a nomination form.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation or agency policy.

Information collected is handled according to established FSA procedures implementing the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, and OMB Circular 130, "Responsibilities for the Maintenance of Records about Individuals by Federal Agencies".

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, etc. that are commonly considered private.

From the information collected the Secretary shall compute annually the participation rate of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. In reporting the rates the Secretary shall report the participation rate of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers according to race, ethnicity, and gender. No other questions of a sensitive nature are asked.

12. Provide estimates of burden.

The annualized, non-capitol costs, are estimated for 10,000 eligible voters. An estimated 10,000 respondents will complete a nomination form.

The estimated number of responses per nomination form is 1.

The estimated average travel time to and from the USDA Service Center is 1 hour. 5,000 respondents X 1 hour = 5,000 burden hours for travel.

Note: Estimate 50% of respondents will drive into the office others will mail or complete form on line.

The estimated average time to respond is .17 hours; $0.17 \times 10,000 = 1,700$ burden hours. The total burden hours is 6,700. (1,700 hours + 5,000 hours)

An estimate of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collection of information is \$151,085.

- \$22.55 per hour times 6,700 = \$151,085.

13. Provide estimates of cost burden to respondents or record or record keepers.

There is no capital and startup cost associated with this collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal Government and to the respondents.

No modifications are being made to this form at this time. Therefore, there is no cost for form development

The county employee cost is 2,500 hours to process the form at the GS-7 Step 5 hourly salary of \$23.15.

This total annualized cost to the Federal Government: \$58,778.

15. Explain reasons for changes in burden, including the need for any increase.

There are no changes to the burden hours since the last OMB approval.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

The collection process of the information will begin not later than 20 days after the date on which an election is held. A county committee shall file an election report with the Secretary and the State Office of the Farm Service Agency that includes the race, ethnicity, and gender of each nominee within that time frame. This information will be provided through the voluntary self-identification of each nominee. A National report will also be completed to present to the Secretary regarding the results of the election. The entire process must be completed not later than 90 days after the date of the election. Beginning date is September 1 of each year and ending date of complete process is March 1 of each year.

The results of the election will be published on the FSA employee and public website.

17. Reasons display of expiration date of OMB approval is inappropriate.

There is no reason not to display the expiration date of the OMB Form, because the county committee election process is on-going and held every year.

18. Exceptions to 83-1 certification statement.

There are no exceptions.

**19. How is the information collection related to the Customer Service Center?
(Will this information collection be part of their one stop shopping?)**

The information collection is to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged customers on the Farm Service Agency County Committee. FSA is a Service Center agency. This information can and will be part of the one stop shopping programs. The nomination forms are available at Service Centers, or online at the Farm Service Agency Internet site.