

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
County Committee Elections -OMB Number 0560-0229**

FSA is requesting for an extension with a revision of a currently approved information collection associated with County Committee Elections (OMB control number of 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 FSA (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, FSA for 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, FSA for 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.

The FSA-669A-3 is another version of the approved form FSA-669 with a different title and the nomination due date. FSA is establishing Urban Agriculture FSA County Committees by expanding to more cities that increased the number of respondents by 500 in this current request.

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 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;**

FSA 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 Tuesday, November 18, 2020 (85 FR 73455). There were no received comments.

The following three non-FSA employee names are provided. There were no comments on all aspects of the information collection request.

Castleberry
7910 Jot Em Down Road
Gainesville, GA 30506

Marie Hoeffner
112 Pole Creek Road
Winston, MT 59647

Scott C. Gordon
3542 CR 1250
Coffeyville, KS 67337

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 will 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.

An estimated 10,500 eligible voters will complete a nomination form.

The estimated number of responses per nomination form is 1.

The estimated average time to respond is 0.25 hours; $0.25 \times 10,500 = 2,625$ burden hours.

Respondent cost per hour was derived by using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2020, 11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers. The U.S. mean household income, as measured by the Bureau of Labor, is \$41.35. Fringe benefits for all private industry workers are an

additional 29.9 percent, or \$12.36, resulting in a total of \$53.71 per hour. The estimated cost is \$140,989 (\$53.71 x 2,625 burden hours).

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.

Program administration at the County Office is estimated at \$99,792 which is computed based on 2,600 hours to process the forms times the average FSA employee wage of \$27.21 (estimated employee average hourly wage; based 2020 General Schedule, Grade 7, Step 6). Fringe benefits for all government workers are an additional 31 percent, or \$8.43, resulting in a total of \$35.64 per hour.

This total annualized cost to the Federal Government: \$92,664.

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

The travels times for respondents has been removed from the request. The current burden hours are 2,625. The average time per respondent changed from 10 minutes to 15 minutes in the forms. FSA is adding 500 respondents in this request because they are expanding to more cities to use the Urban Agricultural nomination form.

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 will 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 public website.

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

FSA is displaying OMB expiration date.

18. Exceptions to 83-1 certification statement.

FSA is able to certify compliance with all provisions under Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.