

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

FSA is requesting for an extension of a currently approved information collection associated with County Committee Elections.

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.

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

This request is an extension with a change of a currently approved collection.

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 FSA system and used by FSA 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 will make 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 available to the public. 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.

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 may bring the form into the office in person, by mail, or submit the form by email. Electronic signatures by an approved source are accepted. FSA anticipates 25 percent of responses will be submitted electronically.

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 is a voluntary and ongoing information collection request. 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:

FSA has 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.

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, December 20, 2023 (88 FR 88041). 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.

Brian C.
Albuquerque, NM

Michelle S.
Neenah, WI.

Nicki S.
Cameron, NC.

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 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, and no personally identifiable information will be shared with the public.

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 2022, 11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers. The U.S. mean household income (75 percent percentile), as measured by the Bureau of Labor, is \$49.58. Fringe benefits for all private industry workers are an additional 29.6 percent, or \$12.77, resulting in a total of \$66.48 per hour. The estimated cost is \$174,510 ($\$66.48 \times 2,625$ 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 \$118,021 which is computed based on 2,600 hours to process the forms times the average FSA employee wage of \$31.26 (estimated employee average hourly wage; based 2024 General Schedule-DC-

MD-VA-WV-PA, Grade 7, Step 6). Fringe benefits for all government workers are an additional 31 percent, or \$14.13, resulting in a total of \$45.39 per hour.

This total annualized cost to the Federal Government: \$118,021.

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

This is an extension without change of a currently approved collection. There are no changes to the burden hours in this request.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

Data reported will be recorded in FSA systems. A National report will be presented to the Secretary within 90 days of election results being finalized. The Secretary will use this information to identify areas that are lacking SDA representation and exercise his authority to appoint members where required. Following the Secretary appointments, election results, including total demographics, will be posted to the FSA election website and available to the public.

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 in the certification statement.