

For: FSA State and County Office Employees

Additional Information for Committee Meetings

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

In consideration of FSA's FY 2011 funding challenges and limitations, many cost savings efforts are being undertaken so that the agency may continue to operate and perform essential services within the current budgetary constraints. Guidance for 1 specific area of potential savings was provided in Notice AO-1504, which required STC and COC to review their activities and only hold meetings when necessary to conduct business. When committees review the activities they are responsible for according to Notice AO-1504, they may determine that they can hold fewer physical meetings without an adverse impact on producer program payments or other program related activities. However, this may create situations where committees need to take action between meetings or hold a meeting by teleconference.

B Purpose

This notice provides guidance on:

- documenting committee teleconference meetings and documenting committee actions between meetings
- setting up multiple line conference calls.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2012	All FSA State and County Office employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice AO-1512

2 STC and COC Meetings

A Committee Meetings

Committee meetings may be conducted in the State or County Office with the committee members in a face-to-face on-site meeting or by participating through distance technology such as teleconferences or LiveMeeting computer applications. No matter how the meeting is conducted, minutes of that meeting and documentation of the committee action is required. See 16-AO, paragraph 58 for STC minutes and paragraph 194 for COC minutes.

16-AO requires that both STC and COC minutes be prepared within 10 workdays of the meeting. The minutes may be sent to the chairperson for review and provided to the chairperson by 1 of the following:

- e-mail
- FAX
- mail delivery services.

The chairperson's signature may be provided back by 1 of the following:

- mail delivery services
- e-mail
- FAXed a scanned copy
- signing the minutes at the next on-site meeting.

B Action Between Meetings

Occasionally, a matter may be so urgent that action **must** be taken between official meetings. This may be done by conference call or telephone poll or any other method by which the members are contacted. All committee action taken between meetings should be documented and recorded in the next set of meeting minutes, which will be signed by the chairperson at the next available opportunity according to subparagraph A.

Notice AO-1512

2 STC and COC Meetings (Continued)

B Action Between Meetings (Continued)

Committee member's time spent on group conference calls discussing and authorizing action between official meetings should be considered official time if it takes 15 minutes or more to accomplish. **If** a minimum amount of time is required to address an issue on an individual member basis, then documenting official time is **not** required. The following table provides an example.

IF...	THEN...
a 20 minute conference call is held with the committee to discuss and decide on an urgent issue	30 minutes of time for participating committee members should be recorded. Note: Thirty minutes is the minimum amount of time allotted to COC's.
an individual 5 minute telephone poll is made to get a yes or no vote from each member	documenting official time is not required.
CED takes a document to the chairperson for signature	documenting official time is not required.
an e-mail question is sent to each committee member	documenting official time is not required for the member to respond to the e-mail.

C Setting Up Teleconferences

State Offices may already have teleconference lines established and may continue to use those lines for committee needs. However, if those lines were established through ITS, migration from Verizon to AT&T is expected by July 2011. These changes will be announced in a future IRM notice.

For States that do not have established teleconference lines, the following provides a current method for establishing those lines.

- State Office personnel may request as many numbers as needed for their counties by contacting Liz Conley at 202-720-6143 or Dana Smith at 202-720-8690.
- The numbers may be used repeatedly, and there is no charge for the numbers, except for the actual minutes and lines used.

Note: Numbers are deleted after 6 months with no use.

- On demand toll free numbers and pass codes are available from the Department's Office of Communications by contacting Liz Conley at 202-720-6143 or Dana Smith at 202-720-8690.