

NASCOE SCOOP



President's Message - Navigating Change Together

Over the past several months, I have received a growing number of questions regarding shared management, reduced service offices, temporary office combinations, and other organizational changes being considered across the country. As these discussions continue to increase, I want to remind everyone that NASCOE has an important role in this process.

The staffing challenges facing FSA are real. For FY 2026, FSA Salaries and Expenses were reduced by \$84 million. Based on information shared at the June NACS Convention, the approved County Office staffing ceiling is 6,168 employees, with approximately 5,970 employees currently onboard—well below the five-year average of 6,937 permanent County Office employees. While there is no nationwide hiring freeze, retirements and resignations continue to outpace hiring, requiring states to make difficult staffing decisions within their approved ceilings.

At the same time, our workload continues to increase. New programs, disaster assistance, economic assistance initiatives, and implementation of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill, require employees at every level of FSA to continue delivering for our producers. County Offices, State Offices, and the National Office are all experiencing these challenges.

Because of these realities, we are seeing more discussions about shared management, reduced service offices, temporary office combinations, and other operational changes. These decisions can impact employees, workloads, office coverage, leadership structures, and the services we provide to our customers.

Change Is Difficult, But Change Can Also Create Opportunity - I understand that change is not easy. When changes are proposed, there are naturally questions, concerns, and uncertainty. However, it is important that we approach each situation with an open mind and consider the facts.

We should not automatically oppose changes simply because they are different from what we have known. Not every proposal will be the right solution for every location, but some changes may provide benefits, including improved employee coverage, increased teamwork, better support for employees, and more sustainable operations for the future.

In some locations, having only one employee in an office every day is not sustainable. Finding ways to work together and support one another may ultimately strengthen our ability to serve our customers.

Understanding the Consultation Process - The consultation process begins at the state association level. Agency policy requires that state associations be consulted on many of these proposals, and this responsibility is reinforced through the Labor Management Agreement.

State association leaders should gather input from all affected employees—members and non-members alike—and use that information to provide thoughtful, fact-based feedback. State associations may support a proposal, recommend alternatives, or express concerns. All of those perspectives are important.

However, consultation does not mean every proposed change will or should be stopped. NASCOE and our state associations have a responsibility to ensure employee voices are heard and concerns are considered, but we must also recognize that leadership decisions involve many factors.

County Committees and State Committees also have important roles in this process. COCs should be consulted, and state associations should be provided the opportunity for input. Once the appropriate consultation process has occurred, the STC has the authority to make the decision they believe is best for the state, even if that decision differs from the recommendation of the COC or state association.

Moving Forward Together - NASCOE will continue advocating for appropriate staffing levels, meaningful employee involvement, and open communication with FSA leadership. We will continue working to ensure employee organizations have a voice in conversations about the future of our agency.

As we navigate these challenges together, I encourage everyone to remain engaged and keep an open mind. Change is rarely easy, but throughout FSA's history we have adapted, found solutions, and continued to serve our producers. There may be changes today that feel uncertain, but in the future we may look back and recognize that some of these adjustments strengthened our workforce, improved collaboration, and better positioned us for success.

NASCOE is here to work with you and for you. Please share your questions, concerns, and ideas through your state association leadership. Your state leaders will work with their Area Executive and, when needed, NASCOE leadership to ensure your voice is heard as we continue moving forward together.

On the Horizon

- **NATIONAL CONVENTION in MICHIGAN**
- EC Meeting 1st Tuesday of the Month
- Monitor Farm Bill Legislation, Economic Assistance and Appropriations bills
- PAC Promotion
- Membership Promotion and Growth
- Stay abreast of Reorganization Plan
- Quarterly call with DAFO
- Legislative Training Fly-In to DC
- Leadership Development
- Programs and Negotiation Submission

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.
— John F. Kennedy

Don't Gamble With Your Benefits - Keep A Winning Hand With NASCOE

July's activity is fairly simple - once the NASCOE Scoop is posted on Facebook, like the post and in the comments leave a fun emoji to earn points!