



National Association of FSA County Office Employees Programs & Negotiations

August 5, 2023

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The NASCOE Programs & Negotiations Committee Breakout Session was called to order by Christa Kraatz, Committee Co-Chairperson. This meeting was held on Thursday, August 3, 2023 starting at 2:30 p.m. The following Committee chairs were in attendance: Audre Hayward, NEA; Sarah Houin, SEA; Meghan Sonderlund, NWA; and Stacia Slover, MWA. There were 12 attendees in the first break out session.

The first breakout session allowed for more questions with the WDC folks working under the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs. A list of the questions and answers will be compiled, thanks to the area chairs and their diligent note taking.

The first breakout session was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

National Committee Co-Chair, Christa Kraatz called the second meeting to order on Friday, August 4, 2023, at 10:25 a.m. In this session, the National Co-Chairpersons introduced themselves and the five Area Committee Chairs. The National Programs & Submissions Committee Co-Chairs gave many accolades and praises to this team. There were 11 people in attendance at this session.

National Co-Chair, Christa Kraatz, provided the group with a background on the new SharePoint site we are utilizing and how this process came about. She compared this to the painstaking process our predecessors, Chris Hare and Katie Taylor were using. We had some glitches along the way but seem to have found a process that will work to make sharing and tracking these submissions with WDC easier on both sides of the collaborative pool. Due to the newness of the National Co-Chairs, and the new system, we recognize we have 50% of our submissions to be addressed yet. We hope that the next month will allow us more time to prepare these for submission now that National Convention is over, and we are past a few of the deadlines in the County Offices.

The Co-Chairs also mentioned that the submission process is gaining traction in the county offices as we saw an increase in submissions by at least 100 from last year. Kudos to those who are continuing to promote this process and explaining that this process is our voice to make changes!

National Co-Chair, Jennie Budahl, then presented slides to the group explaining the difference between program and negotiation submissions and walked them through the process of making a submission from the organization's members and other FSA employees. We shared a few tips that will hopefully alleviate some of the time-consuming process for the Area and National Chairs when reviewing the submissions:

- Please be sure to separate the facts, from the issue and provide a solution. We recommend taking the time to include paragraph references. We have seen a few submissions where the submitter has copied and pasted the same verbiage under the issue, facts and solution field. Any Area or National Chair will be happy to assist a submitter with separating their ideas into the appropriate fields. We hope to post a sample submission to the site in the future.
- If your ask involves a report – please, specify which report in its entirety. This makes the job easier for WDC to know who to direct the concern to and which report to address.
- Please, create multiple submissions if you have multiple asks that may not be related. When the submissions are received by WDC, they assign it to the appropriate specialist in the respective program area. If we have one submission with an ask about CRP and an ask about ARCPLC, for example, they are unable to split that. It can save the Area and National Chairs a great deal of time and, possibly research, if the submitter splits these into multiple asks.

A question was asked regarding when we would see the wins from the 2022 negotiations session. We suspect they will be posted to the website by the end of the weekend as we were holding off until the President had a chance to share a few of them in her report this week. Christa also took this as an opportunity to explain, when we went to WDC in May this year, we brought 2022 negotiations to the table. At the May meeting it was discussed we would hold 2023 negotiations virtually before the National Convention in August, but that did not happen. We are awaiting news on when those negotiations will be held.

The Programs & Negotiations Committee has received a total of 11 program submissions already for the 2024 NASCOE Fiscal Year all of which are in pending status.

As we begin a new fiscal year for NASCOE, we look forward to maintaining and building upon the working relationships NSACOE has with the National Office and continuing the service to our membership. We also want to thank the Area Program Committee Chairs:

Meghan Sonderlund, NWA
Jonathan Weishaar, SWA
Stacia Slover, MWA
Audre Hayward, NEA
Sarah Houin, SEA

The success of this committee is truly because of your work. These Area Program Chairs have spent hours researching the submissions and working with the members in order to achieve the results that will benefit and gain efficiencies for FSA employees to better serve our customers.

Looking Ahead

Goals for the Programs Committee Team for the 2023/2024 NASCOE Fiscal Year are as follows:

- Continue to foster and build relationships with programs specialists in the National Office and educate members and employees regarding Programs and Negotiations processes.
- Continue the use of Bulletins to update membership of wins.
- Catch up on the 2023 submissions.
- Hold 2023 negotiations with WDC virtually.
- Work to improve the answered/closed response percentage.

We look forward to another year serving in the role of NASCOE Programs & Negotiations Committee Co-Chairs.

We respectfully submit this report as written,
Christa Kraatz and Jennie Budahl – National Co-Chairs