



National Association of FSA County Office Employees Midwest Area

August 13, 2023

Ow, my time as Midwest Area Executive is quickly coming to an end. These past couple of years have been a whirlwind filled with meetings, conventions, rallies, traveling, making new friends and advocating for all of you Midwest Area members. The week together in College Station was amazing and I am filled with joy and energy even though it was a busy week. Our EC meetings prior and post-convention were very productive and I feel even more privilege to have been able to serve with the other 4 Area Executives, our officers and committee chairs. I also was very happy to have had successful area breakout meetings where a lot of items were discussed with the members in attendance.

During our three area breakout meetings we had visitors from Dillard Financial Solutions speak to our attendees about some new benefit opportunities that they are working on for us and we had a vibrant discussion with our Legislative Consultant, Hunter Moorhead. During the meetings we had the following attendance:

- Breakout Session 1 – 19 participants
- Breakout Session 2 – 18 participants
- Breakout Session 3 - 14 participants

We heard updates from our Area Chairs that were in attendance – Ron Pethoud, Legislative; Katrina Miller, COAC; LeAnn Oltmanns, Membership; Stacia Slover, Programs and Negotiations; and from our alternate chairs (substituting in the absence of the chair) Janice Acree, Publicity; Mitch Towne (and National Chair Travis Eisle), Benefits; Kaye Vining and Debbie Leeper, Awards and Scholarships. The attendees discussed proposals that had been presented at the committee breakout sessions and input was provided from each state and participant. There was so much to discuss that we ran out of time to have verbal updates from each of our area presidents so a request was made for each state to send a quick update that could be shared amongst the other state presidents. The Midwest Area attendees and delegates support the following:

- SEA Resolution in support of the COC system
- Secretary of State Filing/Merger and Bylaw change
- Awards and Scholarships –Continuing on with Sick Leave award and adding the 4,000-hour category. The area is suggesting that all awards and scholarships be judged anonymously to ensure that there is no biased judging. The MWA would like consideration to be made on eligibility for Past Officers (eligible for DSAs) and Committee Chairs retain eligibility for awards for the subsequent year if they retire from FSA while being a chairperson. The area participants did discuss that all states should ensure that they are promoting the DSAs as we all know very deserving people that should be recognized.
- Legislative – all states are encouraged to promote PAC. We also discussed that if a state has members that are meeting with Congressional leaders or Stakeholders be sure to let Area Executive and Ron know so the Legislative team can be contacted to provide additional information as necessary. All states are encouraged to have a Legislative Chair and to have them participate in the monthly calls with the Legislative Team. Ron also provided a written report for the area.

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- Benefits- Discussed Feds Liability Insurance, Working Advantage and Met Law. If members have other benefits that they wish to see they should contact Kathy Nelson, MWA Chair, or Travis Eisle. A lengthy review of the Benefit Provider bids took place. After questions and discussions, MWA delegates voiced that they are in support of moving forward with Legal Contract Negotiations with Provider B in the matrix. Attendees were reminded that each state has the ability to work with Dillard Financial Solutions for their own conventions and to let the Area Executive know if they have any questions or concerns.
- COAC – Each state is responsible for getting a state COAC Chairperson. This is important so we can continue to educate people on the COC role and stay up to date on any proposed changes.
- Programs and Negotiations – Discussed the process to submit items and to help inform members to take time to research and provide good suggestions and background. The 2022 negotiations were discussed, and update was provided on 2023 session. MWA has a huge number of submissions and great ideas are coming from our members and non-members so please keep it up! Stacia submitted a written report for the area.
- Publicity – Encourage people to keep joining the app, USDA emails are not allowed so all will need a personal email address, Mail Chimp is gone and sensitive/member only information is being shared through the app, training videos may be coming in the future to help with how to use the app. If problems arise, contact the Area Executive or National Publicity Chair. Jamie Wegner has joined us now as the MWA Publicity Chair so we look forward to working with her on a Facebook Page, Utilization of the App and updates to the MWA Website (states will be discussing in future and we need to ensure we reimburse Teresa Holmquist who is paying for the site).
- Membership – discussion on jump teams possible for a couple of states in the upcoming year. The MWA discussed and is opposed to Associate Member dues being paid through the app as many of our states are charging a higher fee. The area feels that if a person wishes to join as an associate member, they should be directed to the state membership chair and president. There was also a discussion about the need to raise dues in the near future along with the need to increase membership. All states will need to look at a change to their bylaws/policies as no state's dues are on a percentage of salary. The area agrees that we need good, detailed communication that we can all share with members to help explain the need to increase dues especially during a time when we continue to see longtime members retire, people drop their membership and new employees not joining like in the past. Current membership for MWA is 67% with 2 states below 60%. LeAnn submitted a written report for the area.
- Discussion regarding the possibility of having a joint MWA and NWA Rally in Fargo, ND for first week of April 2024. Minnesota and North Dakota will get in contact with each other to start looking for a space.

I again need to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to Amy Morman, who has served alongside me these past couple of years as Alternate Executive. She has helped me out tremendously and I would not have been able to represent our area without her! I also need to thank each of our area chairs that spent countless hours on conference calls/meetings and traveling around the area representing us. We have great leaders in the Midwest Area and I am excited to see what the future holds. During our elections Amy Morman was elected to be the Midwest Area Executive and Janice Acree was elected to serve as the Alternate Executive.

The members in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the southern hospitality that Texas provided. We experience “dry heat” and have to say that we would take that heat over our humidity! We are grateful to NASCOE and TASCOE for allowing us to come together again to build relationships, celebrate and share the successes of NASCOE and work together as a large team to find solutions to concerns we are all facing. We are excited to be hosting you all in the Midwest Area next year for the National Convention in the Quad Cities.

Thank you again to the Midwest Area Presidents, Chairpersons, Judges and members for allowing me to work with you all these past years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kayla Mattson

Midwest Area Executive