

## Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections Open This Week

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*December 5 is the Last Day to Return Ballots*

**SPRINGFIELD, Illinois, November 12, 2022** — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began mailing ballots this week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county and urban county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots be postmarked by December 5, 2022, in order for those ballots to be counted.

“County committees provide an opportunity for producers to play a meaningful role in delivering farm programs, but in order for county committees to be effective, they must truly represent all who are producing,” said Scott Halpin, state executive director for FSA in Illinois. “Voting in these elections is your opportunity to help ensure our county committees in Illinois reflect the diversity of our agriculture. Your voice and vote matter, don’t miss your chance to cast your ballot.”

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

Additionally, producers who are not of legal voting age but supervise and conduct farming operations for an entire farm are eligible to vote in these elections.

Each committee has from three to five elected members who serve three-year terms, and at least one seat representing an LAA is up for election each year. Ballots must be in the mail or delivered in person by close of business Dec. 5, 2022, to be counted. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2023.

Producers can find out if their LAA is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from

their local FSA county office. Visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator) to find your local USDA Service Center and [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) for more information.

## Urban and Suburban County Committees?

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to establish county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture.

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs and serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

Urban and suburban county committees in the following cities will hold elections this year: Phoenix, Atlanta, New Orleans, Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Louis, Albuquerque, Cleveland, Portland, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Richmond. These elections will serve local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. A fact sheet on the urban county committee election and a list of eligible cities can be found at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Over the summer, USDA [announced six new urban county committees](#) in Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, New York City, and Oakland. The nomination period for these locations began October 21 and will end on December 2, 2022. Elections will be held from January 3 through January 31, 2023. Learn more at [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban).

## More Information

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://usda.gov).

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