

Office of Advocacy and Outreach

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach was established in the 2008 Farm bill to enhance and improve the programs and to improve the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

The Office is proposed to include programs and functional areas including:

- Small Farms and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program;
- Farm Worker Coordinator Program
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Program
- Higher Education Institutions Program

Additionally, the Office is proposed to include programs and functional areas, which include:

- Community Engagement
- Accountability

Stakeholder input was sought to establish the office and consisted of 3 collaborative work sessions. Further, one of the groups included input from USDA mission areas. The stakeholder recommendations encompassed the Office's structure; an outline of duties and responsibilities of each component structure; the skills and competencies needed to build the staff; and appropriate Grade levels for employees.

Assistant Secretary Reed was charged by Secretary Vilsack with the responsibility for establishing a plan to set up the office by August 1, 2009. The Office will be operational by October 1, 2009.