



Building Rural America
National Association of Credit Specialists
of the
USDA – Farm Service Agency
Management/Personnel Committee

THE MANAGEMENT/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MET AT THE TOWN AND COUNTRY RESORT IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA ON JUNE 24-26, 2013 TO REVIEW RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION:

Resolution 1

CONCERN: FLMs supervising CO-PTs do not have these employees on their worklist in EmPowHR.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: CO-PTs under the supervision of an FLM should appear on their supervision worklist in EmPowHR.

Resolution 2

CONCERN: FLMs, SFLOs, FLOTs and FLOs are currently not provided management training; while COT's are provided management training.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Provide management training to FLOTs, FLOs, SFLOs, and FLMs.

Resolution 3

CONCERN: When a FLM position is vacated and the office would qualify for a SFLO position. States are instead combining offices and increasing the size of service areas for existing FLMs. This is decreasing the promotion potential for FLOs.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Encourage the SED's to use the SFLO position when it is appropriate. This will increase the retention of exceptional employees.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR NON-ADOPTION:

Resolution 4

CONCERN: On August 9, 1989, Congress passed major legislation aimed at reforming the United States financial industry and signed into law the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 (FIRREA). Title XI, the Real Estate reform amendments of FIRREA directly promotes safety and soundness by requiring agencies to adopt regulations on the preparation and use of appraisals by federally regulated institutions. Such real estate appraisals are to be in writing and performed in accordance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. In March 1992 USDA adopted the provisions of 49 CFR Part 24 and published its acceptance of that mandate in 7 CFR Part 21. 49 CFR Part 24 took an Appraiser related structural approach to ensure appraisal independence and required that employees were prohibited from undue influence to coerce Appraisers and/or Review Appraisers, regarding any valuation or other aspects of the appraisal and that persons functioning in the business role of the agency could not supervise or formally evaluate the performance of any Appraiser or Review Appraiser performing appraisal or appraisal related work. In summary the law was intended for the appraiser duties to be separate from the business/loan approval division. In recent years significant changes in the appraiser qualifications, education, training etc. for licenses make it more costly and difficult train and retain employees with Certified General Appraisers License. Other USDA agencies have appraisers performing similar complex duties and are being paid at the higher GS 13 pay grade. Similar changes are mandated for the FSA Appraiser position.

The agency is already too slack on enforcing appraisal requirements for guaranteed loans. Every loan officer needs a certain degree of appraisal training. FSA Appraisers are their only source of appraisal training/education and those efforts will be diminished as the number of trained appraisers decline. Adequate resources must be provided to train more loan officers in appraisal concepts. The potential for Government losses far exceed the cost to upgrade the appraiser position. There are only 35 full time appraisers in FSA. It cost from \$30,000 to \$50,000 for training and education in addition to salary to hire a new appraiser trainee. Few states have appraisers in training to take over when an a current FSA appraisers leaves/retires. Due to the stricter education and training requirements, few people are entering the appraiser profession.

A reduction in duties for existing appraisers is not an option. The agency cannot afford to lower appraisal standards or the level of quality control. Most FSA Staff Appraisers have been doing complex appraisal work for years without adequate compensation. A GS 13 upgrade is a short term solution for a more serious problem of retaining qualified appraisal personnel with the shrinking numbers in the appraiser profession.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: A recent desk audit requested by a typical FSA appraiser indicates many FSA appraisers are performing duties at the GS 13 grade level. Complexity is found in every agricultural appraisal. The quality of the appraisal product is an important issue. Repetition does not reduce complexity but only improves efficiency. An upgrade to GS 13 level for most full time appraiser positions should occur as soon as possible

EXPLANATION FOR NON-ADOPTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Prior to NACS taking a position on an upgrade to a GS 13 for appraisers the desk audit should be reviewed and available to be provided to the national office. However we do support that all employees be paid at the level of work that they are performing.

Resolution 5

CONCERN: In our state, cars are assigned to the District Directors who have been given permission in some cases to drive the cars home. When farm visits need to be made, the person using the car has to bring the car back by 4:00 pm because the DD leaves at this time. This causes an inefficient use of the car in the name of convenience for the DD. The employee's workday ends at 5:30.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The employee should not be forced to cut his/her workday short. This is not an efficient use of the government car. More visits could be accomplished if the employee could utilize the car during his/her entire workday

EXPLANATION FOR NON-ADOPTION BY THE COMMITTEE: This seems to be more of a state issue and scheduling conflict. We can see the difficulty this creates, however if the DD is allowed to use the GOV the national office wouldn't have much say in the matter.

Respectfully submitted by the 2012/2013 Management/Personnel Committee,

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Jeremey Burner, Zone C Chairperson

Danny Lindsey, Zone D