



VA AN No. 434 (2015-B)

United States Department of Agriculture  
Rural Development  
Richmond

August 24, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Public Information, Media Contact, and Outreach Plan

**TO:** Area Directors  
Rural Development Managers  
Rural Development, Virginia

**PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:**

The purpose of this Administrative Notice (AN) is to provide updated information relating to the continued responsibility of field staff to conduct a public relations and outreach effort within their service areas. Additionally, this AN will outline the requirements for completing an outreach plan.

**COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:**

A previous AN on outreach, VA AN No. 304 (2015), expired June 18, 1998.

**IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Each Manager with Rural Development has a responsibility to provide a public relations and outreach effort which positively identifies Rural Development programs within their service area. This responsibility is outlined within each Manager's performance requirements.

**Outreach**

Definition: Outreach is a way of marketing business or programs to ensure that underserved individuals/groups are made aware of, understand, and have a working knowledge of USDA programs.

**EXPIRATION DATE:** July 22, 2005

**FILING INSTRUCTIONS:** File  
preceding RD Instruction 2015-B

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The following will expand on what is considered outreach:

- If an applicant calls or writes the office with a request for information regarding interest in a program and an information/application packet is sent that expands on the delivery of the agency's program.
- If a telephone call (or conference call) was held for the express purpose of explanation of the programs to a group or individual.
- Meetings to offer technical assistance or information are considered outreach.
- Any printed publications explaining the programs and/or any special initiatives that will be undertaken by the agency. This includes newspaper articles and news releases.
- Participation in events i.e. housing conferences, job fairs, (Several displays are available here in the State Office along with handout material. Also, if a nominal fee is required to display at these events, this can be paid by the Agency with prior approval.)

The following activities are not considered outreach efforts:

- After an application for a group or individual loan/grant has been received, continued contact to process and service the loan/grant are considered program delivery, not outreach.

In an effort to reach the under-served groups, strategies should be outlined in your Outreach Plan. If any of the following groups are targeted, please specifically mention this information in the event description of Exhibit A of this AN, so that proper credit can be given when reporting to the National Office.

The following would be considered targeted groups; Minorities, Native Americans, Small Limited Resource Farmers and Women Farmers, Specialty Producers, Small Minority and Women Owned Businesses and Persons with Disabilities.

### **Outreach Plan**

The agency will have written outreach plans for each level in the state (state programs, area office, and the local office). However, Area Offices can include their local offices in their Outreach Plan thus, only one plan will be necessary per Area Office. The plans will be updated for the changing needs and goals of the organization, at the beginning of the fiscal year, based on the initiatives set forth by National Directives and the State Director. The plans will be sent to the State Civil Rights Manager and Public Information Coordinator for review and approval.

Area Directors shall work with their Rural Development Managers and provide the Outreach plan to the State Office for review no later than October 1.

The plans will include the following components:

### **Area Office/Local Office**

- Mission Statement
- Goals/Objectives of the plan
- Coverage area - counties associated with the office, population breakdown of each county, general information on the county (i.e. median household income, geographic location, major industries)
- Team members assisting in the outreach efforts
- Resource requirements - funding requirements, presentation materials, and proposed hours dedicated to outreach
- List of partnering associations, agencies (federal, state, local, and private) that the agency coordinates with to accomplish outreach
- List of media sources that are used in the service area. (The list developed by the Public Information Coordinator will serve as a guide.) See Exhibit B of this AN.

### **Reporting Activity**

Each Manager shall document their public contacts by completing and submitting Exhibit A of this AN to the Public Information Coordinator. Managers may submit the Exhibit A by either email or regular mail, when news articles may be attached. Please submit only one Exhibit A per contact or meeting. These Exhibits will be retained in the State Office and can be utilized for performance ratings as needed.

In addition to submitting Exhibit A, each program and field office will report the accomplishments of the outreach efforts on an annual basis, in a cumulative report from that specific area. This information should be evaluated to determine what worked and what did not work. (Suggestions, applications can be initialed with a number code in the corner of the application corresponding to the numbered event (i.e. outreach effort #1, outreach effort #2) This will help you keep track of what is working for statistical purposes). The information that is gathered will be the foundation for modifying the outreach plan for the forth coming fiscal year outreach plan. Activities that are very productive can be shared with other offices and activities that are not as productive can be examined or ceased. The report will be due on September 30.

### **Press Releases**

When press releases for funding or updates to Rural Development programs are announced, these releases are provided to you from either the State Public Information Coordinator (PIC) and/or your Area Director to be sent to local media contacts in hopes of publication.

In carrying out your public information outreach, it is realized that not all press releases are printed in your local service area. However, it is your efforts to provide this information to your local media that is important. It is also encouraged to arrange a personal visit to your local media sources from time to time to establish and maintain a rapport with the sources thus, increasing the likelihood for publication of your news releases.

In addition to the normal press releases, if you have a special human interest story from your service area that you feel may make a good public relations article, please contact Vern Orrell in the State Office and he can assist in development of the story for your area media sources.

Let us continue to provide Virginia with a positive public image of Rural Development Programs and also showcase to the media all the good, life improving efforts that each of you make happen every day.

If you have any questions concerning this AN please contact Vern.Orrell@va.usda.gov (PIC) in the State Office at 804-287-1590 or Daniel.Bedford@va.usda.gov (SCRM) at 804-287-1563.

JOSEPH W. NEWBILL  
State Director  
USDA, Rural Development

Attachments

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Examples: Newspaper, Radio, Outreach Visit, Other

Describe contact:

Example: Press Release on funding printed in October 12<sup>th</sup> issue of Rural Times

Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list name of media outlet: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of attendees if an outreach visit was involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Was a special group targeted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Examples: Minority group, women owned business, faith based group, etc.

Other comments:

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If a newspaper article was generated, please attach and send to PIC.