



# **OUTREACH ASSISTANCE** **HANDBOOK**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Utah State Office  
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building  
125 S. State Street, Room 4211  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

*"Helping People Help the Land"*

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service instituted a National Outreach Policy, [230 GM Part 406](#), in 2003. This policy provides guidance to agency staff to meet outreach requirements and accountability standards.

Utah Field Offices are to include outreach as a component of the Field Office Business Plans.

By: Teresa Wilde

## STEP 1

### ***Identify underserved and non-traditional customers for each county in your area.***

Field offices are responsible for identifying these individuals and/or groups in their service areas. Here are some resources to help:

1. [Utah Agricultural Quick Stats](#)
2. [Utah State and County Profiles](#)
3. [NASS - Agricultural data - Zip Code tabulations](#)
4. [NASS - Agricultural tables - State data](#)
5. [NASS - Agricultural tables - County data](#)
6. [NRCS Social Science Team \(fact sheets and data\)](#)
7. **Employee and Partner knowledge**
8. **Minority organizations**
9. **County Government (Public Health, Social Services, Recorder, Assessor)**
10. **Local Chamber of Commerce**
11. **Community non-profit organizations**
12. **Local media**



## STEP 2

### ***Get to know your Potential Customer Groups and their Needs***

Once you have identified the groups in your county, gather some information about them to better understand their needs and the best communication methods to reach the groups. Your outreach efforts will be more successful if you know your audience.



#### **What you need to know:**

- Characteristics (social, economic, cultural), attitudes and perspectives
- Connections to land and agriculture
- Natural resource or other needs and problems as they see it.
- Current efforts in the community to address the natural resource needs
- What is limiting participation? (e.g.: Lack of information/knowledge, lack of financial or technical resources, communication barriers, lack of trust in government )
- Why should they participate?
- What are the benefits to them?

#### **How do you gather the information?**

##### Resources include:

- Staff knowledge
- Partner knowledge
- Census data
- Local agencies and organizations that serve the underserved groups
- Local newspapers or other media that serve the underserved groups
- Field office records of assistance and participation
- FSA and other government agency records
- University or Extension Service research and reports

## *Understanding Underserved Customers*

Understanding customers and potential customers by considering the characteristics, problems, and needs they have in common can be helpful in outreach efforts and success. The following chart may provide information to consider.

Characteristic	Considerations
Education level	Does the producer have a college education or are they self-taught?
Occupational status	Are they a full-time or part-time farmer/rancher? Do they have an off-site job?
Intergenerational land transfer	What are the long range operational plans? Will the children take over farm?
Risk orientation	Is the producer a risk taker or not?
Number of innovations adopted	Does the producer have a prior history with the agency? Has implementation been above or below average?
Use of local media to disseminate conservation information	What sources are used – local, ethnic, etc.
Conservation planning	What is the likelihood of the producer following a conservation plan?
Local organization participation	Is the community active or not?
Awareness of resource concerns	Is the producer aware of the resource concerns? Are the resource concerns above or below average?
Farm size	Is the farm above or below the county average?
Ownership/rental	Is the land rented or owned? What are the percentages of rented and/or owned land?
Lease arrangements	How long is the lease? Is the lease stable or not?
Gross farm sales	Are the farm sales above or below the county average?

## Step 3

### ***Develop an Outreach Component to include in your Field Office Business Plan***

- Set a goal
- Identify the target audience
- List the barriers and benefits to them
- Write 2-3 short messages to communicate
- Identify how and when you will communicate (meetings, direct mail, media, posters, newsletters, etc.)



### **Be creative!! Action items can include, but are not limited to:**

- Hold demonstrations and tours with members of underserved groups
- Conduct meetings, training sessions, and presentations
- Identify and contact key leaders in the community
- Develop brochures to meet specific needs
- Develop and distribute surveys
- Develop advisory or mentoring networks
- Develop partnerships with non-traditional groups and organizations
- Market the agency better and to non-traditional groups
- Issue news releases to media used by underserved groups
- Become involved in cultural groups
- Display posters and signs where underserved groups tend to gather
- Personal contacts are often the best and most effective communication
- Provide church bulletin inserts
- Create and maintain information at local libraries and parks

## Step 4

### ***Identify and Request Any Resources for Outreach Implementation***

Remember to use volunteers, local organizations, and other partners to help you. Some items are accomplished better and more effectively by non-agency individuals that have more expertise, credibility, or contacts with particular groups.

- Work with your supervisor
- Contact the Public Affairs or Outreach staff for assistance
- Work in cooperation with your partners
- Enlist volunteers for help
- Invite local or community organizations to participate



### **What funds are needed and available? What technical expertise is needed and available?**

- Consider all sources for financial and technical support: USDA, state, county, local and private possibilities for both funding and technical support.

Conservation districts

Local communities

State and federal agencies

NRCS Earth Team volunteers

Agricultural and environmental groups

Conservation Districts Employees

Professional societies

Resource Conservation and Development Councils

Universities and Extension Services

Conservation organizations

Agribusiness

Sportsman Groups

## Step 5

***Carry out your plan!***

***Evaluate your progress and report success stories.***

- Contact the Public Affairs or Outreach staff for assistance
- Take pictures, if applicable, to enhance your story
- Have fun helping people help the land!



**Use the Outreach Reporting Form to get credit for your work!**

# NRCS Utah Outreach Reporting Form

*Please provide enough information for a short article to be written about the event.*

**EVENT DATE:**

**EVENT TITLE:**

**AUDIENCE:**

**LOCATION:**

**PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION (Short narrative):**

**PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED:**

**NRCS STAFF INVOLVEMENT (Who was involved and the role played in the event):**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Submit to:  
Marnie Wilson, Outreach Coordinator  
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