

AFWA Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds Committee Federal Assistance Coordinators Working Group Guidelines

BACKGROUND

The Working Subcommittee (hereafter referred to as Subcommittee) was established by action of the full Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Committee of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) at their meeting in Washington, D.C. on January 24, 1978. This action was taken as a means to provide State input on the regulations and policies guiding federal assistance (FA) programs administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Assistance Division (FWS-FA). Since that time, the Subcommittee has been consulted when State input based upon a detailed working knowledge of FA programs is desirable. A membership term of 2 years was established in 1978. In 1983, staggered 2-year terms were initiated and in 1987 staggered three-year terms were approved. In 1998, the Subcommittee name was revised to "Federal Aid Coordinators Subcommittee" from what was called the "Working Subcommittee." The "GIA" Committee has been renamed the "Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds Committee" (FWTFC). In 2001, both the IAFWA and the FWS-FA reaffirmed their desire for the Subcommittee to continue operation. In 2003, the FWTFC renamed the "Federal Aid Coordinators Subcommittee" the "Federal Assistance Coordinators Subcommittee." If agreeable to the FWTFC Chair, the Subcommittee would prefer "Federal Assistance Coordinators Working Group" (hereafter referred to as FAC Working Group). In September 2002, the Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy (Joint Task Force) was formed to review operational policies and administrative issues of national significance for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Grant Program. The Joint Task Force's purpose is to provide a process for the Service and state fish and wildlife agencies to cooperatively identify program issues and jointly develop recommendations for their resolution.

FAC WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- A. Composition:** One Federal Assistance Coordinator and one alternate from each FWS Region (except Alaska, which is considered part of Region 1 for Subcommittee membership purposes). It is recommended that FAC Working Group members have a working knowledge of both the biological and administrative aspects of FA programs. Membership will generally rotate on a three-year basis with the alternate succeeding the previous subcommittee member. Regions may adopt shorter or longer lengths of tenure if accepted by a majority of Federal Assistance Coordinators in the Region.
- B. Election:** Federal Assistance Coordinators in each FWS Region shall elect an alternate generally every three years on the established staggered rotation. Terms shall begin and end on October 1 of each three-year period unless a longer or shorter length of tenure is adopted by the FWS Region. If the elected FAC Working Group member cannot complete their term they were elected to fill. An individual can serve no more than five consecutive years as a Subcommittee member. Replacement alternates may be elected at any time to fill vacancies caused by a FAC Working Group member and/or alternate being unable to complete their

assigned term. Any replacement (alternate or member) shall serve the balance of their predecessor's term. The FAC Working Group member is responsible for coordinating the election of a new alternate during the third year of their term.

- C. Chair:** The FAC Working Group Chair shall be elected annually by a majority of Subcommittee members and shall act as liaison with the FWTFc and the FWS-FA. The FAC Working Group Chair should be a member of the FWTFc and should have a comprehensive working knowledge of FA programs and be involved with the management and implementation of FA programs on a daily basis.

DUTIES OF FAC WORKING GROUP

- A. Provide recommendations for and complete assignments made by the chair of the FWTFc.
- B. Provide FWS-FA a means for early review and recommendations for new actions or revisions to FA program, procedures, policies and/or legislation.
- C. Solicit input from State FA Coordinators on topics applicable to FWTFc meeting agenda topics and FWS-FA program management and provide that input to FWTFc chair and FWS-FA Regional Chiefs during regularly scheduled meetings.
- D. To ensure consistent FA Program administration and new program implementation; provide technical guidance and assistance to FWS-FA on matters such as FA Handbook revision, implementation of Director's Orders, identification of State training needs, "trouble-shooting" existing practices and recommending solutions.
- E. Identify emerging issues that may result from audits or new funding.
- F. Inform other State FA Coordinators in respective region of all FAC Working Group activities.

DUTIES OF FAC WORKING GROUP CHAIR

- A. Non-voting chair of FAC Working Group whose primary responsibility is to serve as facilitator for the Subcommittee.
- B. Serve as the liaison between the FWTFc and FAC Working Group and between the FWS-FA and the FAC Working Group.
- C. Provide written summary reports to FAC Working Group members and the chair of the FWTFc within one month of any FAC Working Group meetings or other significant FAC Working Group communication.
- D. Coordinate the preparation of agendas at least one month prior to any FAC Working Group meeting.
- E. Provide an annual report of activity to the FWTFc meeting at the Fall AFWA meeting.
- F. Provide FAC Working Group members with copies of FWTFc meeting agendas and minutes.

OPERATIONS OF THE FAC WORKING GROUP

As assigned by the FWTF and requested by the FWS-FA, the FAC Working Group will meet with the FWS-FA Regional Chiefs to review work in progress and identify areas of interest in the FA program that the FAC Working Group might address.

Any proposed areas of interest identified at these meetings shall be reviewed with the chair of the FWTF before finalizing.

The FWS-FA shall make an effort to incur the expense associated with joint FAC Working Group/FWS-FA meetings.

Joint Task Force (JTF) Issue Identification: FACWG Roles and Responsibilities

1. Issues received by the JTF Co-Chairs no later than February 15th.
2. Issues distributed to the FACWG no later than February 28th.
3. FACWG Member from that region may contact that state FAC to obtain additional information on the issue if necessary. Any information obtained will also be provided to the WSFR Chiefs.
4. FACWG holds a conference call in March to develop a recommendation on each issue in anticipation of the Spring Meeting of the WSFR Chiefs/FACWG.
5. At the Spring Meeting of the WSFR Chiefs/FACWG, an agenda session will produce recommendations on each issue received.
6. Once a recommendation is made, the Chair and Co-Chair of the FACWG will develop a brief statement (1-2 paragraphs), in consultation with the appropriate WSFR Staff, that addresses whether or not the issue merits JTF consideration.
7. For issues that merit JTF involvement, the FACWG will propose a priority order for addressing the issues recommended for JTF involvement.
8. All information used to make the determination will be included in package sent to JTF members.
9. If consensus cannot be reached between the WSFR Chiefs and FACWG, each group will develop a short position statement on the issue (1-2 paragraphs) to be presented to the JTF.
10. At the Spring JTF Meeting, the FACWG Chair and Co-Chair will provide the perspective of the FACWG to the JTF during the issue discussion.