a county committee member, alternate to any county office, county executive director, or other employee of the county committee for: Failure to perform the duties of the office; committing, attempting, or conspiring to commit fraud; incompetence; impeding the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; refusal to carry out or failure to comply with the Department’s policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including equal employment policy, or interfering with others in carrying out such policy; or for violation of official instructions, unless such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator.

(c) The county executive director or any other employee of the county committee must not have been disqualified for future employment because of a determination by a State committee that during previous service as a county committee member, alternate to any county office, or as an employee of the county committee, the person has: Failed to perform the duties of such office or employment; committed, attempted, or conspired to commit fraud; impeded the effectiveness of any program administered in the county; refused to carry out or failed to comply with the Department’s policy relating to equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy, or interfered with others in carrying out such policy; or violated official instructions, unless such disqualification is waived by the State committee or the Deputy Administrator.

§ 7.20 Prohibition on dual office.

(a) A member of the county committee cannot, during the time they are a committee member, also serve as:

(1) The secretary to the county committee;
(2) A member of the State committee; or
(3) A county executive director or any other county office employee.

(b) [Reserved]

§ 7.21 Terms of office of county committee members.

(a) The term of office of county committee members and alternates to such office will begin on a date fixed by the Deputy Administrator, which will be after their election or appointment.

(b) Before any county committee member or alternate to the county committee may take office as a county committee member, such person must sign an oath of office to pledge that they will faithfully, fairly, and honestly perform to the best of their ability all of the duties devolving on them as committee members.

(c) A term of office will continue until a successor is elected and qualified as specified in §§7.8 and 7.9 or appointed as specified in §7.17.

§ 7.22 State committee duties.

The State committee, subject to the general direction and supervision of the Deputy Administrator, will be generally responsible for carrying out all Farm Programs in the State or any other functions assigned by the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary.

§ 7.23 County committee duties.

(a) The county committee, subject to the general direction and supervision of the State committee, will be generally responsible for carrying out in the county Farm Programs and any other program or function assigned by the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary.

(b) The county committee will:

(1) Employ the county executive director, subject to standards and qualifications furnished by the State committee, except that incumbent directors must not be removed except as specified in §7.28. There must be no employment discrimination due to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. The county executive director may not be removed for advocating or carrying out the Department’s policy on equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy. In the event it is claimed that dismissal is for such reasons, the dismissal will not become effective until the State committee and the Deputy Administrator have determined that dismissal was not because of such reasons;
(2) Direct outreach activities to reach and inform socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers of all programs and county committee election processes;

(3) Follow official instructions to review, approve, and certify forms, reports, and documents requiring such action;

(4) Recommend to the State committee needed changes in boundaries of local administrative areas;

(5) Make available to farmers, ranchers, and the public information concerning the objectives and operations of the programs administered through the county committee;

(6) Make available to agencies of the Federal Government and others information with respect to the county committee activities in accordance with official instructions issued;

(7) Give public notice of the designation and boundaries of each local administrative area within the county prior to the election of county committee members;

(8) Direct the giving of notices in accordance with regulations and official instructions;

(9) Recommend to the State committee desirable changes in or additions to existing programs;

(10) Conduct such hearings and investigations as the State committee may request; and

(11) Perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the State committee.

§ 7.24 Chairperson of the county committee duties.

The chairperson of the county committee or the person acting as the chairperson will preside at meetings of the county committee, certify such documents as may require the chairperson’s certification, and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the State committee.

§ 7.25 County executive director duties.

(a) The county executive director will execute the policies established by the county committee and be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the county office.

(b) The county executive director will:

(1) In accordance with standards and qualifications furnished by the State committee, employ the personnel of the county office. There must be no employment discrimination due to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. An employee may not be removed under this paragraph for advocating or carrying out the Department’s policy on equal opportunity and civil rights, including the equal employment policy. In the event it is claimed that the dismissal is for such reason, the dismissal will not become effective until the State committee and the Deputy Administrator have determined that dismissal was not because of such reason;

(2) Receive, dispose of, and account for all funds, negotiable instruments, or property coming into the custody of the county committee.

§ 7.26 Private business activity and conflicts of interest.

(a) No county committee member, alternate to any such office, or county office employee, may at any time use such office or employment to promote any private business interest.

(b) County committee members, alternates, and any person employed in the county office will be subject to the official instructions issued with respect to conflicts of interest and proper conduct.

§ 7.27 Political activity.

Permitted and prohibited political activities, with respect to any State committee member, county committee member, county executive director, or any other county employee, will be determined in accordance with applicable policies specified in FSA handbooks and directives.

§ 7.28 Removal from office or employment for cause.

(a) Adverse personnel actions involving any county committee member or alternate member, county executive director, or other county office employee will be taken for failing to perform the