

USDA National Appeals Division (NAD): Helping Farmers and Ranchers Appeal USDA Decisions

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Overview:

The National Appeals Division (NAD) is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Its main purpose is to give farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners a fair way to appeal decisions made by certain USDA agencies. These agencies manage programs that affect agriculture and rural communities, including:

AGENCY	PROGRAM
Farm Service Agency (FSA)	Crop payments, disaster relief, loan.
Risk Management Agency (RMA)	Crop insurance programs.
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Conservation programs and technical help.
Rural Housing Agency (RHA)	Rural housing loans and grants.
Rural Business Cooperative Service (RBCS)	Business support and cooperative programs.

If a farmer or rancher receives a decision that they believe is incorrect, they can file an appeal with NAD. This process is free and allows them to tell their side of the story to an independent Administrative Judge (AJ). New facts, documents, and evidence can be shared during the appeal. The judge then decides whether the agency made a mistake.

Appeals must be submitted within 30 calendar days of receiving the decision. Appeals can be submitted appeal online, by mail, or by fax using the official Appeal Request Form.

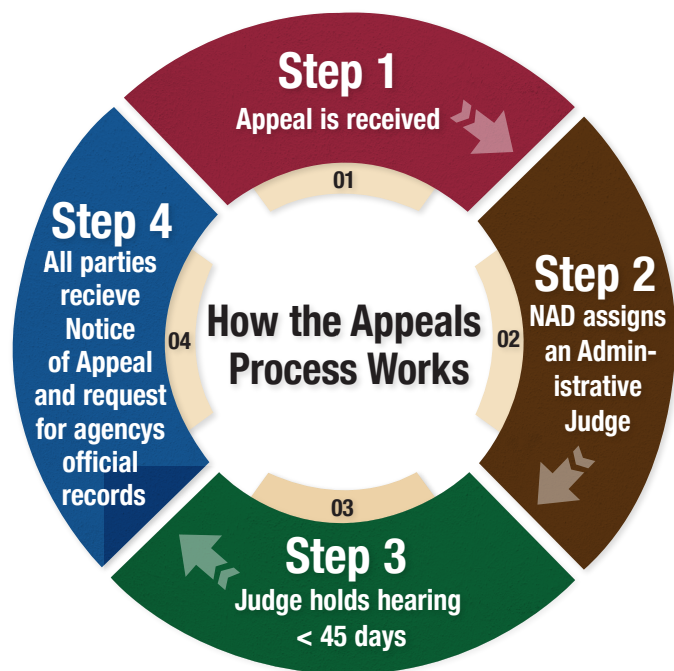
How the Appeals Process Works

Once an appeal is received, NAD assigns an Administrative Judge to the case. The judge must hold a hearing within 45 days. All parties will receive a Notice of Appeal and a request for the agency's official records.

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Figure 1. How the Appeals Process Works.



Before the hearing, a short Pre-Hearing Conference (usually over the phone) is held to decide how the hearing will be conducted. Hearings may happen in different ways:

- In person – often held at a local USDA office.
- By phone – if more convenient.
- By record review – where the judge reviews documents without a live hearing.

Farmers or ranchers will be told in advance how their hearing will take place. Once all the information is presented, the judge has 30 days to decide. If either side disagrees with the decision, they can request a Director Review, and both parties can ask the Director to reconsider the final outcome.

Contacting NAD

Farmers and agricultural producers can reach out to NAD through the national office or through one of its three regional offices.

CONTACT INFORMATION

National Headquarters.
Toll Free: 1-877-487-3262.
Jennifer Guerrieri, Ombudsman. Alexandria, VA.

Southern Regional Office.
Toll Free: 1-800-552-5377.
Tezra Woody, Director.
Direct: (901) 554-0360. P.O. Box 1508.
TTY: 1-800-627-8332. Cordova, TN.
Fax: 1-855-438-8034.

The Southern Region supports agricultural producers in:

- Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.
- And the territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For More Information:

USDA – National Appeals Division.
<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-and-appeals/national-appeals-division>.

USDA – NAD Appeals. <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-and-appeals/national-appeals-division/nad-appeals>.

USDA – NAD – Frequently Asked Questions.
<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-and-appeals/national-appeals-division/frequently-asked-appeal-questions-faqs>.

USDA – NAD – Contact NAD. <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-hearings-and-appeals/national-appeals-division/contact-nad>.