

USDA Now Accepting Applications for Available Funds to Help Cover Organic Certification Costs

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Lincoln, Nebraska, May 17, 2024 – Through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#), USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will cover up to 75% of organic certification costs at a maximum of \$750 per certification category. FSA is now accepting applications, and organic producers and handlers should apply for OCCSP by the Oct. 31, 2024, deadline for eligible expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. FSA will issue payments as applications are received and approved.

“Costs associated with obtaining organic certification can be a barrier for Nebraska producers wanting to get certified,” said Tim Divis, Acting FSA State Executive Director in Nebraska. “Through OCCSP assistance, FSA helps Nebraska organic producers obtain certification and leverage related benefits like premium prices for commodities and access to broader markets and additional technical assistance.”

OCCSP was part of a [broader organic announcement](#) made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on May 15, 2024, which also included the Organic Market Development Grant program and Organic Transition Initiative.

Eligible Applicants, Expenses and Categories

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of organic agricultural commodities for expenses incurred obtaining or maintaining organic certification under USDA’s National Organic Program. Eligible OCCSP applicants include any certified organic producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Cost share assistance covers expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, inspector travel expenses, user fees, sales assessments and postage. OCCSP pays a maximum of \$750 per certification category for crops, wild crops, livestock, and processing/handling.

How to Apply

To apply, producers and handlers should contact FSA at their local USDA Service Center and be prepared to provide documentation of organic certification and eligible expenses. For more information, visit the [OCCSP webpage](#).

More Information

USDA offers other assistance for organic producers, including the [Organic Transition Initiative](#) (OTI), which includes direct farmer assistance for organic production and processing and conservation. For more information on organic agriculture, visit farmers.gov/organic. ?

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

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