
USDA Receives Grant Applications from 33 States for Organic Certification Cost Share Program

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Transition Certification Reimbursement Removed from Program Scope

April 19, 2017 - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Acting Administrator Chris Beyerhelm, today announced that under the December Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP), USDA has received grant applications totaling approximately \$7 million to 33 states under the initial deadline of Feb. 17, 2017. The states include: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. USDA is reviewing grant agreements requests and will begin providing agreements to states for signature.

Under the same NOFA, the Farm Service Agency provided notice that applications are being accepted nationwide in any of FSA's more than 2,100 county offices as an additional convenience to producers and handlers. USDA reimburses organic producers up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope (crops, livestock, wild crops, handling, and state organic program fees), but only about half of the nation's organic operations have historically participated in the program. Producers and handlers may apply for federal reimbursement to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification.

USDA Farm Service Agency is revising program policy to remove transitional certification as a scope for reimbursement under the Organic Certification Cost Share Programs because no transitional certification programs are currently established under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. In the near future, a revised Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be published in the Federal Register. Existing submissions will still be reviewed, minus the transitional certification scope. State grant applicants are being alerted to the change in scope. For more information, please see the Farm

Service Agency website.

Other states may apply for funds in the coming months or continue their programs using carryover funds from previous years. FSA will continue to partner with states to administer the programs. Many states have entered into a grant agreement and certified organic producers and handlers in those states can apply, or continue to apply, for cost share assistance through their state department of agriculture. To determine if your state department of agriculture will offer organic certification cost share, contact the state department of agriculture, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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