

REPORT TO CONGRESS
Fiscal Year (FY) 2023
NATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAMS

I. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers two organic certification cost share programs collectively referred to as the Organic Certification Cost Share Programs (OCCSP): (1) the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (National), and (2) the Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program (AMA). OCCSP provides cost share to producers and handlers who are obtaining an initial certification or for continuation of certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agent, in accordance with the USDA organic regulations.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides the cost share assistance through two approaches: (1) by establishing grant agreements with State agencies that provide cost share payments to producers and handlers in their state; and (2) by issuing payments directly to producers and handlers who apply for cost share payments at one of FSA's 2,141 county offices. Applicants may apply with either the State agency or FSA in States where a State agency participates in OCCSP. However, applicants may not apply through both the State agency and FSA.

OCCSP is administered according to the Notice of Funds Availability published on April 29, 2019, which provides that OCCSP will cover 75 percent of an applicant's eligible organic certification expenses, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification category,¹ which is the maximum amount allowed by law ([84 FR 17997-17999](#)).² On August 10, 2020, FSA published a revision to the Notice of Funds Availability announcing that the amount of cost share for fiscal years 2020 through 2023 would be reduced to 50 percent of an applicant's eligible expenses, up to \$500 per scope, due to the limited amount of funding available and expected participation rates ([85 FR 48149-48150](#)).³ On May 10, 2023, FSA announced in a press release that sufficient OCCSP funding was available for FY 2023 to increase the amount of cost share to 75 percent of eligible costs, up to \$750 per scope, as provided in the initial Notice of Funds Availability.⁴ In 2023, FSA announced the availability of National and AMA funds through a variety of communication channels, such as telephone calls and emails to State contacts, outreach materials, and informational postings to Grants.gov and through the FSA Web site:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occp/index>.

¹ The certification categories are crops, livestock, wild crops, processing/handling, and State Organic Program fees. The category of State Organic Program fees was added as an eligible category in 2017. It applies only to producers in a State with a recognized State Organic Program under the National Organic Program regulations.

² The Notice of Funds Availability published on April 29, 2019, addresses administration of OCCSP for FYs 2019 through 2023. FSA announced the availability of OCCSP for FY 2024 in a Notice of Funds Availability published on May 9, 2024 ([89 FR 39579-39580](#)).

³ For FYs 2020 through 2022, FSA also provided cost share for eligible organic and transitional certification and education expenses through the Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP) in response to economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic that made obtaining and renewing USDA organic certification financially challenging for many operations. OTECP was announced on November 5, 2021 ([86 FR 61113-61116](#)).

⁴ See <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/05/10/usda-announces-new-steps-enhance-organic-markets-and-support>.

A. National OCCSP

The National OCCSP is authorized under Section 10606 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 6523), as amended by Section 10004(c) of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 113–79), Section 10105 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 115-334), and Division B, Section 102, of the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-22).⁵ Funding for National OCCSP is “no year” funding, available to certified organic producers and handlers in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories (hereafter referred to as “States”). Twenty-six State agencies chose not to participate in fiscal year 2023; however, certified operations in all states could participate through FSA county offices. State agencies that did not participate are American Samoa, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, the Northern Mariana Islands, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Funds obligated through grant agreements that are not used are returned to FSA and available for later years.

B. The AMA OCCSP

The AMA OCCSP is authorized under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 1524(b)). Under this authority, Congress provided authority for USDA to annually provide organic certification cost share assistance to certified organic producers operating in 16 specifically named States: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. State agencies in Delaware, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Nevada, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming chose not to participate, citing inadequate resources to manage the program or a decision to let FSA administer all OCCSP payments in that State. To prevent duplicate assistance payments, producers participating in the AMA OCCSP are not eligible to participate in the producer portion of the National OCCSP. Unused funds are returned to the Treasury because AMA OCCSP funds are annual funds.

II. FISCAL YEAR 2023

A. National Participation

Under the 2023 National OCCSP, \$7,544,000⁶ was available under the 2018 Farm Bill, and \$4,519,676 in unobligated funding was available from prior years. FSA allocated \$5,699,659 to the 30 State

⁵ The 2018 Farm Bill authorized \$2 million from CCC to be used for National OCCSP for each of FYs 2019 and 2020, \$4 million for FY 2021, and \$8 million for each of FYs 2022 and 2023, to remain available until expended. The Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024, authorized an additional \$8 million in National OCCSP funding for FY 2024.

⁶ The 2018 Farm Bill authorized \$8,000,000 in National OCCSP funding for FY 2023, which was sequestered at 5.7 percent for a total apportionment of \$7,544,000.

agencies that signed grant agreements. These State agencies subsequently disbursed \$4,475,799 in cost share assistance to 4,710 qualifying organic operations. Funds apportioned for FY 2023 that were not allocated to State agencies were available to provide payments directly to certified operations through FSA county offices. Under the 2023 National OCCSP, FSA county offices have disbursed \$2,946,903 to 5,812 certified operations. Any remaining National OCCSP funds that were not spent by State agencies or FSA remain available for future fiscal years.

The Appendix to this report provides State-by-State data on the funds allocated and disbursed by participating State agencies and FSA county offices. Disbursements vary by the number of requests for reimbursement submitted by organic operations.

B. AMA Participation

Under the 2023 AMA OCCSP, \$943,000⁷ was apportioned for 16 States authorized to receive funds by the legislation. FSA allocated \$925,500 to the nine States that signed agreements with FSA to participate. The participating State agencies subsequently disbursed \$844,794 in cost share assistance to 1,288 qualifying organic operations.

The Appendix to this report provides State-by-State data on the funds allocated and disbursed by participating State agencies and FSA county offices.

⁷ In FY 2023, AMA OCCSP was authorized \$1,000,000 and then sequestered at 5.7 percent for a total apportionment of \$943,000.

III. APPENDIX

National Organic Certification Cost Share Program FY 2023 Allocation and Disbursement

| State | State Agency Funding and Disbursements | | Funds Disbursed by FSA County Offices | Number of Operations Assisted by State Agencies | Number of Operations Assisted by FSA County Offices |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | FY 2023 Allocation ¹ | FY 2023 Funds Disbursed ² | | | |
| Alabama | \$2,5000 | \$825.00 | \$1,290 | 1 | 3 |
| Alaska | \$6,471 | \$6,338 | \$500 | 9 | 1 |
| American Samoa | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arizona | \$50,190 | \$49,470 | \$8,250 | 49 | 14 |
| Arkansas | \$5,100 | \$4,797 | \$10,634 | 6 | 20 |
| California | \$2,029,308 | \$1,694,9344 | \$57,754 | 1,435 | 113 |
| Colorado | N/A | N/A | \$91,803 | 0 | 171 |
| Connecticut | \$14,588 | \$14,438 | \$13,001 | 22 | 25 |
| Delaware | N/A | N/A | \$3,004 | 0 | 4 |
| Dist. of Columbia | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Florida | \$35,000 | \$30,148 | \$16,387 | 34 | 32 |
| Georgia | N/A | N/A | \$29,975 | 0 | 52 |
| Guam | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hawaii | N/A | N/A | \$35,613 | 0 | 73 |
| Idaho | N/A | N/A | \$78,537 | 0 | 158 |
| Illinois | N/A | N/A | \$156,961 | 0 | 265 |
| Indiana | N/A | N/A | \$325,687 | 0 | 723 |
| Iowa | N/A | N/A | \$238,231 | 0 | 472 |
| Kansas | \$33,525 | \$25,326 | \$37,492 | 32 | 67 |
| Kentucky | \$50,550 | \$50,550 | \$10,554 | 104 | 20 |
| Louisiana | N/A | N/A | \$24,039 | 0 | 40 |
| Maine | \$197,870 | \$197,050 | \$4,958 | 194 | 12 |
| Maryland | \$34,050 | \$6,980 | \$5,539 | 13 | 10 |
| Massachusetts | \$4,875 | \$2,850 | \$58,265 | 4 | 110 |
| Michigan | N/A | N/A | \$179,734 | 0 | 334 |
| Minnesota | \$221,625 | \$174,968 | \$145,382 | 206 | 288 |
| Mississippi | \$4,950 | \$1,440 | \$12,493 | 1 | 20 |
| Missouri | \$49,425 | \$10,963 | \$29,894 | 15 | 53 |
| Montana | \$135,432 | \$80,074 | \$12,500 | 112 | 27 |
| Nebraska | N/A | N/A | \$99,242 | 0 | 191 |
| Nevada | N/A | N/A | \$13,042 | 0 | 24 |
| New Hampshire | N/A | N/A | \$27,515 | 0 | 80 |
| New Jersey | \$48,450 | \$48,450 | \$24,826 | 61 | 47 |
| New Mexico | N/A | N/A | \$10,217 | 0 | 19 |
| New York | \$150,000 | \$93,707 | \$338,770 | 93 | 689 |
| North Carolina | \$135,000 | \$94,925 | \$38,175 | 141 | 71 |
| North Dakota | \$97,500 | \$85,077 | \$3,513 | 108 | 7 |
| N. Mariana Islands | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ohio | \$343,050 | \$165,171 | \$127,648 | 185 | 253 |
| Oklahoma | N/A | N/A | \$8,216 | 0 | 20 |
| Oregon | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$78,387 | 178 | 157 |
| Pennsylvania | \$215,850 | \$215,850 | \$53,921 | 249 | 103 |

| State | State Agency Funding and Disbursements | | Funds Disbursed by FSA County Offices | Number of Operations Assisted by State Agencies | Number of Operations Assisted by FSA County Offices |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | FY 2023 Allocation ¹ | FY 2023 Funds Disbursed ² | | | |
| Puerto Rico | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rhode Island | \$8,100 | \$1,073 | \$1,000 | 2 | 2 |
| South Carolina | \$13,350 | \$4,610 | \$4,053 | 10 | 12 |
| South Dakota | N/A | N/A | \$30,147 | 0 | 64 |
| Tennessee | N/A | N/A | \$8,834 | 0 | 17 |
| Texas | \$37,725 | \$33,233 | \$49,298 | 31 | 88 |
| U.S. Virgin | N/A | N/A | \$500 | 0 | 1 |
| Utah | N/A | N/A | \$13,200 | 0 | 23 |
| Vermont | \$325,275 | \$314,283 | \$36,631 | 368 | 85 |
| Virginia | \$30,900 | \$8,666 | \$92,882 | 18 | 176 |
| Washington | \$624,000 | \$413,612 | \$46,022 | 537 | 97 |
| West Virginia | N/A | N/A | \$6,081 | 0 | 10 |
| Wisconsin | \$645,000 | \$495,993 | \$225,175 | 492 | 428 |
| Wyoming | N/A | N/A | \$21,131 | 0 | 41 |
| Total | \$5,699,659 | \$4,475,799 | \$2,946,903 | 4,710 | 5,812 |

¹ Amount FSA authorized the State agency to use for reimbursement to certified organic operations plus indirect costs, if applicable, to cover State agencies' administrative expenses. N/A represents non-participation by the State agency.

² Funds paid by the State agency to reimburse certified organic operators plus indirect costs, if applicable, to cover State agencies' administrative expenses.

AMA Organic Certification Cost Share Program FY 2023 Allocation and Disbursement

| State | State Agency Funding and Disbursements | | Funds Disbursed by FSA County Offices ³ | Number of Operations Assisted by State Agencies | Number of Operations Assisted by County Offices ³ |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | FY 2023 Allocation ¹ | FY 20232 Funds Disbursed ² | | | |
| Connecticut | \$26,100 | \$20,663 | \$0 | 30 | 0 |
| Delaware | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hawaii | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maine | \$180,000 | \$180,000 | \$0 | 284 | 0 |
| Maryland | \$32,600 | \$21,038 | \$0 | 49 | 0 |
| Massachusetts | \$38,125 | \$9,075 | \$0 | 14 | 0 |
| Nevada | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| New Hampshire | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| New Jersey | \$20,125 | \$20,125 | \$0 | 30 | 0 |
| New York | \$260,000 | \$241,530 | \$0 | 324 | 0 |
| Pennsylvania | \$110,000 | \$103,300 | \$0 | 151 | 0 |
| Rhode Island | \$6,500 | \$3,135 | \$0 | 11 | 0 |
| Utah | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vermont | \$252,050 | \$245,929 | \$0 | 395 | 0 |
| West Virginia | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wyoming | N/A | N/A | \$0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | \$925,500 | \$844,794 | \$0 | 1,288 | 0 |

¹ Amount FSA authorized the State agency to use for reimbursement to certified organic operations plus indirect costs, if applicable, to cover State agencies' administrative expenses. N/A represents non-participation by the State agency.

² Funds paid by the State agency to reimburse certified organic operators plus indirect costs, if applicable, to cover State agencies administrative expenses.

³ AMA funds were used to fund grant agreements with the State agencies and were not paid through FSA county offices.