



WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS ALLIANCE

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Restores Organic Certification Cost Share Program

An announcement came today from the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) today providing some hope and much deserved financial assistance for certified organic farmers regarding the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Certified Organic Farmers are now eligible for reimbursement up to \$750 per year up to 75% of their annual cost of organic certification per scope. This means that if an operation has more than one scope (e.g., two or more of the four scopes – crops, wild crops, handling, livestock), they are eligible to receive a \$750 reimbursement up to 75% of the annual cost of organic certification for each scope in 2023. USDA Secretary Vilsack announced this exciting news at the Organic Trade Association's Organic Week where WODPA is being represented following the written announcement release which can be found at [USDA Announces New Steps to Enhance Organic Markets and Support Producers | USDA](#).

As you may recall, this program was cut in 2020 during the COVID pandemic when farmers saw increased costs and unprecedented loss of markets. Today's announcement restores the reimbursement levels to the authorized levels outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Today's announcement is an exciting step in the right direction, but its continued restoration is not guaranteed to be included in the 2023 Farm Bill. What a great time for our Executive Director, Lia Sieler, to be in Washington DC advocating on Capital Hill!

Organic Certification Cost Share Fact Sheet can be found at [Organics - Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(usda.gov\)](#).

Apply today! [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\) \(usda.gov\)](#)

WODPA would like to express our sincere thanks to all those that have continued to fight for organic farmers and specifically this Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

USDA Announces New Steps to Enhance Organic Markets

USDA Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Organics

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Introduction
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP), administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides organic producers and handlers with financial assistance to reduce the cost of organic certification. The program reimburses producers and handlers for a portion of their paid certification costs. Once certified, organic producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for 75 percent of certification costs for program year 2023, up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops, handling, and State Organic Program fees.

Who is Eligible?
Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees during the 2023 program year may apply for reimbursement of the incurred costs.

Program Year	Covers expenses paid from	The application deadline is **
2021	Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021	Nov. 1, 2021
2022	Oct. 1, 2021 through Sept. 30, 2022	Oct. 31, 2022
2023	Oct. 1, 2022 through Sept. 30, 2023	Oct. 31, 2023

Is Certification Required to Participate?
Yes. Organic certification cost share funds are only available to certified organic producers and handlers. Certification must be provided by a USDA-recognized certifying agent. If your operation is not currently certified organic and you would like to learn more about the certification process, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic.

What Costs are Reimbursable?
Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments, and postage.

What Costs are Not Reimbursable?
Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certification fees, late fees, and inspections necessary to address National Organic Program regulatory violations.

What is the Maximum Reimbursement Amount?
The maximum per certification scope (crops, livestock, wild crops, handling, or State Organic Program fees) is \$750.

How Do I Apply for a Reimbursement?
You may apply to a participating state agency according to their deadlines, or you may apply directly to one of over 2,100 FSA offices. Applicants must typically submit a one-page application form, W-9 tax form (to participating state agencies), proof of certification and an itemized invoice of certification expenses.

For More Information
This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other eligibility requirements may apply. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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