



Organic Certification Cost Share Programs

The Organic Certification Cost Share Programs (OCCSP) reduce the cost of organic certification in accordance with the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) aim to strengthen market support for U.S. agriculture. It reimburses organic producers and handlers for a portion of their organic certification costs. The certification assistance available through the USDA is authorized by two different pieces of legislation. The National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) is authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, commonly known as the Farm Bill. The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Organic Certification Cost Share Program is authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 2001.

How Much Money Is Available?

Approximately \$13 million has been allocated for each fiscal year through 2018; \$1.4M for the AMA and \$11.5M for the NOCCSP, annually. Each state is allocated funds based on the number of certified operations in their state and past fund usage.

Who Is Eligible?

Producers and handlers in all fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands are eligible to participate in the NOCCSP.

Participation in the AMA is restricted to producers in the following 16 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

How Do I Apply For Reimbursement?

If your operation is already certified organic, contact your State Agency for application procedures. You can locate your state agency contact at <http://bit.ly/NOPCostShareStates>. If you are seeking organic certification, you can find information on the process for certification at <http://bit.ly/OrgCertification>.

What Costs Are Reimbursable?

Eligible costs: Application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel /per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments, and postage.

Ineligible costs: Equipment, materials, supplies, late fees, transitional certification inspections, and inspections necessary to address NOP regulatory violations.

How Does It Work?

The USDA enters into noncompetitive grant agreements with and allocates cost share funds to State agencies (typically Departments of Agriculture) to administer the cost share programs. Organic operators who have received organic certification or a renewal of certification from an accredited certifying agent between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014 are eligible to participate and typically submit a one-page application form, a W-9 Tax Form, proof of certification, and an itemized invoice of certification expenses to their State agency. The State agency reviews the application and then may reimburse the operator for 75% of the cost of certification, up to a maximum of \$750 per category of certification –crops, wild crops, livestock and processed products.

Still Have Questions?

Contact Us.

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National Organic Program Cost Share pages:

<http://bit.ly/OrganicCostShareInfo>