



Organic Certification Cost Share Programs

The USDA Organic Certification Cost Share Programs (OCCSP) provide organic producers and handlers with financial assistance to reduce the cost of organic certification. The programs reimburse producers and handlers for a portion of their paid certification costs. Once certified, organic producers and handlers are eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 75% of certification costs each year up to a maximum of \$750 per certification scope—crops, livestock, wild crops and handling.

What Programs Does the OCCSP Include?

The OCCSP consist of two distinct USDA organic certification cost share programs:

- National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance Organic Certification Cost Share Program (AMA)

Both programs are overseen by USDA and have similar eligibility requirements; however, AMA funds are only available to producers in 16 specific states.

For more information on the differences between the two programs, visit <http://bit.ly/OrganicCostShareInfo>.

Who Is Eligible?

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees may apply for reimbursement of the incurred costs.

Is Organic Certification Required to Participate?

Yes. Organic certification cost share funds are only available to certified organic producers and handlers.

If your operation is not currently certified organic and you would like to learn more about the certification process, please visit <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.

What is the Maximum Reimbursement Amount?

Since there are four possible scopes, the maximum reimbursement amount is \$3,000. This would occur if the operator is certified for all four scopes and the overall allowable certification costs are equal to or greater than \$4,000 (the 75% rule).

How are the Programs Administered?

The USDA allocates cost share funds to State agencies (typically departments of agriculture), which then administer the cost share programs and provide reimbursement to producers and handlers.

How Do I Apply For Reimbursement?

Application processes vary by State, but typically require applicants to submit a one-page application form, a W-9 Tax Form, proof of certification, and an itemized invoice of certification expenses. If your operation is already certified organic, contact your State Agency for application procedures at <http://bit.ly/NOPCostShareStates>.

Still Have Questions?

Visit <http://bit.ly/OrganicCostShareInfo>

Contact **Rita Meade, OCCSP Coordinator**
Phone: 202-260-8636 | Fax: 202-205-7808
Email: Rita.Meade@ams.usda.gov