



Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## **USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs for Organic Certification**

**News Release | Nebraska | August 11, 2020**

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**WASHINGTON, August 10, 2020** – USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for federal funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#). Applications are for eligible certification expenses paid between Oct. 1, 2019, and Sept. 30, 2020.

Applications are due Oct. 31, 2020.

“For producers producing food with organic certification, this program helps cover a portion of those certification costs,” FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. “Contact your local FSA county office to learn more about this program and other valuable USDA resources, like farm loans and conservation assistance, that can help you succeed.”

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA’s National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Eligible expenses for cost-share reimbursement include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

### **Changes in Reimbursement**

Due to expected participation levels and the limited funds available, FSA revised the reimbursement amount available through fiscal year 2023. Certified producers and handlers are now eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 50 percent of the certified organic operation’s eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope.

This change will allow a larger number of certified organic operations to receive assistance. If Congress authorizes additional funding, FSA may provide additional assistance to certified operations that have applied for OCCSP, not to exceed 75 percent of their eligible costs, up to \$750 per scope.

## More Information

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), view the [notice of funds availability on the Federal Register](#), or contact the [FSA county office](#) at your local USDA Service Center. All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors may also be required to wear a face covering during their appointment.

To learn more about USDA support for organic agriculture, visit [usda.gov/organic](https://usda.gov/organic).

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