



## Mississippi – National Organic Cost-Share Program FY2023

**Applications will be accepted through November 1, 2023.**

### **Legislative Authorities**

The National Organic Certification Cost Share program (NOCCSP) is authorized under section 10606(d)(1) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 6523(d)), as amended by section 10004(c) of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 113–79) and Section 10105 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill, Pub. L. 115-334). Under this authority, Congress authorizes USDA to provide organic certification cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining certification under the National Organic Program. These producers and handlers may be located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

USDA – Farm Service Agency administers the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) using relevant sections of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 and the Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 CFR 200. FSA awards OCCSP funds to eligible State Agencies, which operate as a pass-through system, by accepting and approving their applications so that they can issue reimbursements to organic operations.

### **Eligibility**

Operations must possess USDA organic certification at the time of application to be eligible to receive reimbursements. To be eligible:

1. A producer or handler must have paid fees/expenses related to certification under the National Organic Program between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023.

An eligible certified organic operation must provide the following information to apply for reimbursement through the OCCSP:

1. Evidence that the operation(s) holds a valid organic certification under the National Organic Program at the time of application
2. An itemized receipt that identifies allowable costs paid within the qualification period of October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, (refer to Allowable and Unallowable Costs);
3. A completed State Agency Application for certified operations located within the State; entities with certified organic operations located in more than one State shall submit applications to the State Agencies in which the certified organic operations are located.
4. A W-9 Tax Form
5. Proof of payment

NOTE: *Operations with suspended, revoked, or withdrawn certifications are ineligible for cost share reimbursement. The applicable USDA Organic regulations and resources for certification are available on the AMS website at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop).*

## **Allowable Costs: Reimbursements**

Reimbursements to producers and handlers of agricultural products obtaining certification under the National Organic Program are limited to 75% (seventy-five percent) of an operation's total allowable certification costs up to a maximum of \$750 (seven hundred and fifty dollars) per certification scope.

Below is a list with a sample of costs which may be reimbursed, as well as those which are ineligible. This list is meant to be demonstrative, not exhaustive.

### **Allowable Costs**

- Application Fees
- Inspection fees, including travel costs and per diem for organic inspectors
- USDA Organic Certification Costs, including fees necessary to access international markets with which AMS has equivalency agreements or arrangements
- User Fees/Sale Assessments
- Postage

### **Unallowable Costs**

- Late Fees
- Inspections due to violations of USDA Organic regulations
- Charges related to non-USDA organic certifications
- Membership Fees
- Consultant Fees
- Materials, Supplies & Equipment
- Costs related to transitional certifications
- Costs related to any other labeling programs

## **National OCCSP (Producers and Handlers)**

Producers and handlers of agricultural products obtaining certification under the National Organic Program, including organic operations certified to the scopes of: crops, wild crops, livestock and handler (processing) are eligible to participate in the NOCCSP.

## **Limitations**

A producer or handler may apply for OCCSP reimbursement from either the State Agency (MDAC) or through a local USDA-FSA office, they cannot receive payment from both. If a duplication payment is inadvertently made, then FSA will inform the participant and require that funds be returned.

## **Application Process**

Once a producer or handler receives proof of organic certification from an accredited certifying agent (first organic certifications) or once a producer or handler has incurred expenses related to the renewal of the certification, then the operator may apply for reimbursement. Applicants should keep records of all invoices and payments for certification-related expenses.

Reimbursements may not be processed until the applicant is granted certification.

Applicants must submit copies of following documents to MDAC:

- USDA organic certificate, or other proof of certification issued by a USDA-accredited certifying agent issued between October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023.
- Reimbursement Form (See attachment).

- Itemized invoice for certification-related expenses.
- IRS W-9 tax form.
- Documentation of the payment made (ex: cancelled check).

Please return all documentation to the following address:

Mississippi Department of Agriculture

Attn: Susan Lawrence

P.O. Box 1609

Jackson, MS 39125-1609

Or by email to: [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov)

MDAC must receive all required documents no later than **November 1, 2023**, in order to receive reimbursement. Reimbursements will be made on a first come first serve basis until all funds have been disbursed.

### **Program Contacts**

For more information or questions about the program, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Lawrence by email at [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov) or by phone at (601) 213-7542.



**Mississippi – National Organic Cost-Share Program FY2023**  
**Reimbursement Form**  
**October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023.**

Name of Operation \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Owner/Operator \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Certifying Agent \_\_\_\_\_

Total Organic Acres Farmed \_\_\_\_\_

Products \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Certification \_\_\_\_\_

Certification Scopes: (please check all that apply)

<b>Certification Scope</b>	<b>Certification Expense</b>	<b>X 75%</b>	<b>= Reimbursement Amount (max of \$750 per scope)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Crops	\$	x 75%	= \$
<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock	\$	x 75%	= \$
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Crops	\$	x 75%	= \$
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling	\$	x 75%	= \$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>		<b>\$</b>

\*For costs that apply to more than one scope, divide the amount by the number of all scopes for which the cost was incurred.

Only allowable costs paid within the qualification period of October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, are eligible for cost share.

I certify the certified organic farm or handling facility is located within Mississippi.

**Please remember to include:**

- USDA organic certificate or certification.
- Reimbursement Form.
- Itemized invoice for certification-related expenses.
- IRS W-9 tax form.
- Documentation of the payment made.

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Application Packet To:	For office use only
Mississippi Department of Agriculture Attn: Susan Lawrence, Organic Cost Share P.O. Box 1609 Jackson, MS 39125-1609  <a href="mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov">susan@mdac.ms.gov</a>	Date of Certification _____ Approved Reimbursement _____ Approval Date for Funding _____