

2023 Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) Guidelines

Organic farms and companies that sell, process, or package certified organic agricultural products are eligible to receive 75% of certification-related costs incurred (see #2), with a maximum of \$750 per operation or category if they meet the following criteria:

- They received initial or continuation/renewal of certification or are in the process of becoming certified organic to USDA National Organic Program (NOP) standards between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023, and
- The certified operation is located in Wisconsin.

Funding for this program is provided by and contingent upon funds provided by cooperative agreement between the FSA and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Frequently Asked Questions and Suggestions

1. To qualify, does my certified farm or handling operation have to be located in Wisconsin?

Answer: Yes, the owner/operator can live out of state, but the operation must be physically located in Wisconsin.

2. What kind of costs will the program reimburse?

Answer: Application, certification, inspection, user fees (from milk checks, too) are all eligible.
*However, late fees, membership fees, and penalties are **not** eligible.*

3. How does DATCP determine my eligibility?

Answer: We review submitted documents and verify current certification and invoices with your certifier.

4. What documentation do I need for reimbursement?

- Completed application form
- A copy of a certificate or letter from your certifier proving that you received initial or continuation/renewal of certification between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023;
- Copies of itemized, paid invoice(s) with proof of payment (such as a date paid and zero balance indicated by the certifier) from your certifier documenting certification-related costs incurred and paid between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023. Cancelled checks or invoices that do not show proof of payment are not an acceptable form of documentation. Incomplete applications cannot be processed.
- PLEASE NOTE: Since verification from the certifier is part of DATCP's process, you can inquire if your certifier will provide proof of certification and expenses rather than submitting this information yourself; however, this must be arranged with your certifier.
- A W-9 form, an official form needed to process payments to citizens or businesses, is required unless you already have a current W-9 on file. If you applied for cost share through DATCP in previous years, your W-9 is on file.

5. How much cost share am I eligible to claim?

Answer: Payment will be for 75% of your certification costs up to a maximum of \$750 per scope.

- If you maintain certification in more than one category/scope such as crop, livestock, or handler, and paid fees for each, you may be eligible for up to a \$750 reimbursement for each category.
- Payment depends upon the total organic certification costs you paid between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023.
- You DO NOT need to submit a separate application for each scope of certification you hold but be sure to make it clear how many types of certifications you have (crops, livestock, handler, etc.)

6. Can I participate if I received a payment in a previous year?

Answer: Yes, you may receive organic certification cost-share annually.

7. Does certification from any certifying agency count?

Answer: You must receive National Organic Program (NOP) organic certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agency. If you have questions about the accreditation status of your certifier, call your certifier or check with the NOP at www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

8. When should I apply?

Answer: We will begin accepting applications on Monday, July 31, 2023. You may submit your application before you have incurred all expenses eligible for reimbursement between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023, or before you have paid out \$1,000 or more per certification scope (the amount that will generate the maximum eligible reimbursement). If you do so, please mark, “Please hold my application” on your application. However, while the program is administered on a first come, first served basis, we do not anticipate running out of funds.

9. By what date do I need to submit my application?

Answer: To guarantee receiving Organic Certification Cost Share reimbursement, applications should be postmarked/emailed/received on or before October 31, 2023. Although the deadline is often extended, this is not guaranteed, and late applications may be denied. Please note, these funds are administered on a first come, first served basis, but we do not anticipate running out of funds.

10. How do I apply for Organic Cost Share?

Answer: Complete the DATCP OCCSP application and submit the completed application along with supporting materials to the DATCP Organic Cost Share Program. Individuals have a choice of three different ways to submit all required materials:

1. Mail the application and supporting documentation to:
DATCP-DAD, Organic Cost Share Program,
P.O. Box 8911,
Madison, WI 53708
2. Email the application and supporting documentation to: datcporganiccostshare@wi.gov, or

3. Fill out the application and upload supporting documentation on DATCP's OCCSP online form:
<https://form.jotform.com/221645689186065>

11. Do I have to submit everything all at once using the same application method?

Answer: Although it is preferred to have everything submitted together at one time, it is acceptable to submit additional support documentation later using the same or different application method. For example, an applicant can fill out the online JotForm application form and then email or mail in the supporting documentation.

12. I have more questions, whom can I contact?

Answer: Andrew Bernhardt: datcporganiccostshare@wi.gov or 608-572-0512.

Tips for Completing W-9 Forms Accurately

Incorrect information in the W-9 is the most common reason Cost Share payments get delayed. Follow the tips listed below to help ensure your application is able to be processed.

- Be sure to fill out the form in its entirety. Be sure you choose an entity designation, provide a social security number or EIN, and sign the bottom of the form. If any of these items are missing, we cannot process your Cost Share payment.
- If you are uncertain about anything on the W-9, your best answers will come from your tax preparer.
- Legal Name and Trade Name can be confusing. Only fill out your trade name if you want your check to be made out to the entity listed as your trade name and it is different from your legal name. If you file your taxes under your legal name, not a trade name, you most likely don't want to list a trade name.
- Remit Address vs. Primary Address: Your remit address is where you want your check to be mailed. Your primary address is most likely where the farm/business is located.
- If you are a married couple, you CANNOT put both your names on this form. The legal entity is a person or business. The person or business has a Social Security or EIN number. More than one person cannot be listed on a W-9
- EIN or Social Security Number: If you are a corporation or in most cases, an LLC partnership, you should provide an EIN number. A Social Security number usually suffices for the other options. Be sure to check the box stating which you provided. Without this number, we cannot process your payment. We do not give out these numbers as part of public records and keep any forms with this information locked.