

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Organic Certification Cost Share Program 1-OCCSP	Amendment 4
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Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



Amendment Transmittal

A Reasons for Amendment

Subparagraph 1:

- D has been amended to update Notice of Funds Availability publication date
- I has been amended to update the application period for 2019 through 2023.

Subparagraph 3 B has been amended to add that State agencies that established a 2019 agreement may request an extension of their agreements and receive additional funds to administer the program in future years.

Subparagraph 21 A has been amended to add that if an applicant pays expenses during a program year but does not receive their certificate until after the application deadline, the producer may submit a late-filed application.

Subparagraph 23:

- A has been amended to add eligible expense dates for 2019 through 2023 program years
- C has been added to provide information on questionable invoice costs.

Subparagraph 30 A has been amended to add the 2019 through 2023 application period dates.

Subparagraph 30 B has been amended to clarify CCC-901 OCCSP requirements.

Subparagraph 31 A has been amended to clarify item 10 of the instructions on completing CCC-884.

Subparagraph 31 B has been amended to include the updated CCC-884 for 2018 and subsequent years.

Subparagraph 41 H has been amended to update the e-mail addresses of National Office contacts to report funding errors.

Amendment Transmittal (Continued)

A Reasons for Amendment (Continued)

Subparagraph 50 B has been amended to clarify that to be eligible for OCCSP reimbursement, a producer must be operating under the same name and TIN for all their farming operations.

Exhibits 4 and 5 have been amended to update the link for the letters.

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6	Letter Notifying Applicant Original Documents Are Being Returned

Part 1 General Information

1 Overview

A Handbook Purpose

This handbook provides policy and procedure to State and County Offices for administering OCCSP for 2017 and subsequent years.

B OCCSP Purpose

OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers who are obtaining organic certification for the first time or renewing their previous certification. Organic certification is obtained through certifying agents accredited by the USDA NOP.

Reimbursement for 75 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs will be provided by OCCSP, up to a maximum of \$750 for each of the following categories, or "scopes":

- crops
- wild crops
- livestock
- processing/handling
- State organic program fees.

Currently there are no transitional certification programs established under the Organic Food Production Act of 1990, or the NOP regulation in 7 CFR Part 205. Therefore, transitional

*--certification is **not** an eligible scope under OCCSP.--*

Cost share assistance is provided on a **first come, first served basis**, until all available funds are obligated. Applications received after all funds are obligated will **not** be paid.

1 Overview (Continued)

1 Overview

C Program History and Administration

USDA implemented OCCSP through AMS beginning in FY 2008. In FY's 2008 through 2016, AMS administered the program through grant agreements with State agencies, which allowed State agencies to accept applications from producers and handlers and make cost share payments after receiving funds through AMS.

For FY 2017 and subsequent years, the Secretary has delegated FSA authority to administer OCCSP on behalf of CCC. FSA will provide cost share assistance in the following two ways:

- State agencies may continue to provide cost share payments to producers and handlers by establishing a grant agreement with FSA
- producers and handlers may apply directly to an FSA County Office for cost share payments.

Note: In States where a State agency continues to participate in OCCSP, OCCSP applicants shall **not** apply through both the State agency and FSA County Office for cost share assistance for the same scope in the same program year.

1 Overview (Continued)

D Authority

*--OCCSP provisions for FY's 2019 through 2023 were announced through a Notice of Funds Availability 84 FR 17997 published on April 29, 2019. OCCSP funding is authorized by:

- Section 10606(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 6523(d)), as amended by Section 10105 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill, Pub. L. 115-334), providing National funding through 2023--*
- 7 U.S.C. 1524, as amended by section 1609 of the 2014 Farm Bill, providing **AMA OCCSP funding** * * *, limited to producers for crops, wild crops, and livestock scopes in the following 16 States:
 - Connecticut
 - Delaware
 - Hawaii
 - Maryland
 - Massachusetts
 - Maine
 - Nevada
 - New Hampshire
 - New Jersey
 - New York
 - Pennsylvania
 - Rhode Island
 - Utah
 - Vermont
 - West Virginia
 - Wyoming.

Organic certification under the NOP is authorized by the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501-6524) and is subject to the regulations in 7 CFR Part 205.

1 Overview (Continued)

E Related Handbooks

Handbooks related to OCCSP include the following:

IF the material concerns...	THEN see...
referring possible fraud cases to OIG	9-AO.
appeals	1-APP.
records management	32-AS.
signatures, powers of attorney, names and addresses, controlled substances, deceased individuals, or closed estates	1-CM.
requests for relief and finality rule provisions	7-CP.
payment processing, including OLP	1-FI.
bankruptcy flags, claims, and withholdings	58-FI.
prompt payment interest	61-FI.
establishing direct deposits, assignments, and joint payees	63-FI.
establishing and reporting receipts and receivables	64-FI.
releasing information through FOIA	2-INFO.
outreach activities	22-AO.

F Modifying Provisions

Provisions in this handbook shall **not** be revised without prior approval from the National Office. Revisions include adding, deleting, editing, clarifying, supplementing, or otherwise amending any procedure, form, or exhibit.

A separate State or county handbook shall **not** be created.

G Forms

Forms, worksheets, applications, and other documents other than those provided in this handbook or issued by the National Office shall **not** be used for OCCSP.

Any document that collects data from a producer or handler, regardless of whether their signature is required, is subject to the Privacy Act and information collection procedures, including clearance of these documents by the following offices:

- National Office program area
- MSD, IMB, Forms and Graphics Section
- OMB.

Forms, worksheets, and documents developed by State or County Offices **must** be submitted to the National Office for review and approval.

Important: State and/or County Office-developed forms, worksheets, or other documents shall **not** be used for OCCSP unless approved by the National Office before use.

1 Overview (Continued)

H Basic Rule of Fractions

Fractions will be rounded after completing the entire computation. In rounding, fractional digits of 49 or less will be dropped and digits of 50 or more will be increased by 1 as follows.

Required Decimal	Computation	Result
Whole Numbers	6.49 or less	6
	6.50 or more	7

I Important Dates

Program Year	COVERS expenses paid from...	AND the application period is...
2017	October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017	March 20, 2017, through Oct. 31, 2017 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
2018	October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018	October 1, 2017, through Oct. 31, 2018 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
*--2019	October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019	October 1, 2018, through October 31, 2019 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
2020	October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020	October 1, 2019, through October 31, 2020 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
2021	October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021	October 1, 2020, through October 31, 2021 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
2022	October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022	October 1, 2021, through October 31, 2022 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).
2023	October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023	October 1, 2022, through October 31, 2023 (late-filed applications will be accepted if funds are available).--*

2 Responsibilities

A DAFP Responsibilities

DAFP will:

- develop all OCCSP policies
- ensure that OCCSP is administered according to law and the provisions announced in the NOFA
- provide guidance and instruction on AMA and national OCCSP funding availability
- *--establish grant agreements with State agencies
- approve reimbursements to State agencies
- ensure that applicants do not receive OCCSP benefits from both a State agency and FSA for the same program year and scope.--*

B STC Responsibilities

STC's will:

- direct the administration of OCCSP
 - ensure that State and County Offices follow OCCSP provisions
 - thoroughly document all actions taken in STC meeting minutes
 - review all CCC-884's executed by State Office employees, COC members, CED's, County Office employees, and their spouses
- Note:** For employees or COC members other than SED, STC has authority to direct DD's to conduct these reviews as STC representative.
- provide DD with a copy of STC or DAFP determinations for appeal or misaction and misinformation cases
 - handle appeals according to 1-APP and 7 CFR Parts 11 and 780
 - require reviews be conducted by STC representative according to subparagraph 33 C to ensure that OCCSP is being implemented according to OCCSP provisions

Note: STC's may establish additional reviews to ensure that OCCSP is administered according to OCCSP provisions.

- handle suspected fraud cases according to applicable procedure.

3 Outreach (Continued)

B Coordination with Participating State Agencies

State agencies may establish a grant agreement with FSA through the National Office, allowing the State agency to receive OCCSP funds and make payments to certified producers and handlers. If a State agency establishes an agreement to administer OCCSP, both the State agency and FSA County Offices in that State will accept applications and make payments to producers and handlers. Outreach efforts by FSA in those States must include information on both options for applying for the program.

The National Office will:

- notify State Offices in States where a State agency has established an agreement to administer the program

***--Note:** State agencies that establish agreements for FY 2019 may request an extension of their agreements and receive additional funds to administer the program in future years.--*

- provide contact information for participating State agencies at **<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index>**
- provide guidance to State Offices on coordination of outreach efforts with State agencies.

4 Equitable Relief Requests and Appeals

A Equitable Relief and Finality

Equitable relief and finality provisions in 7-CP apply to OCCSP.

If an application is submitted after the end of the application period, the County Office shall accept the late-filed application and consider it to be a request for programmatic relief according to 7-CP.

B Appealable Determinations

Applicants have the right to appeal FSA decisions on CCC-884's when there is a question of fact or a factual dispute or an assertion about correctly applying a rule or generally applicable provision to a set of facts. See 1-APP for appealable determinations.

County Offices will issue a letter to applicants about the result of processing CCC-884 when a payment is either **not** computed or determined **not** to be owed to the applicant. This decision will be considered to be a decision of a COC employee and must provide appeal rights according to 1-APP.

See Exhibit 4 for an example of a letter advising an applicant that a payment was not computed, or will **not** be issued, in response to CCC-884.

C Nonappealable Determinations

Cases involving FSA decisions on CCC-884's that have no disputes of fact are not appealable. Generally applicable provisions are not appealable according to 1-APP, including but not limited to the following:

- eligibility conditions or criteria
- signature requirements
- payment calculations.

Letters notifying applicants that a decision is not appealable must clearly explain to the applicant the reasons that the decision is not appealable.

Note: Avoid using general and vague statements that do not sufficiently demonstrate the reasons that a decision is not appealable. Applicants may request that SED or NAD director review FSA's determination that an adverse decision is not appealable.

Part 2 Eligibility

21 Eligible Applicants

A Producers and Handlers

To be eligible for OCCSP payments, a producer or handler **must** have both of the following:

- a valid organic certification for their operation at the time of application

Notes: The applicant **must** be the certified operation shown on the organic certificate. Certified operations may be individuals or entities.

Operations with DBA on their organic certificate are eligible for OCCSP. Record DBA on the information line for the address in Business Partner to connect the operator of record to the name on the organic certificate.

--If an applicant pays expenses during a program year but does not receive their certificate until after the application deadline, the producer may submit a late-filed application.--

Operations with suspended, revoked, or withdrawn certifications at the time of application are ineligible for cost share reimbursement.

- paid fees or expenses related to its initial certification or renewal of its certification from a certifying agent.

*--**Note:** If a third party paid fees or expenses, contact the National Office for guidance.--*

OCCSP cost share assistance is available for certified producers and handlers located in:

- all 50 States
- District of Columbia
- Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
- Guam
- American Samoa
- United States Virgin Islands
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

OCCSP funds are provided through two separate authorizations: **National OCCSP funds** and **AMA OCCSP funds**. National OCCSP funds are available for producers and handlers in all eligible States and territories and for all scopes. AMA OCCSP funds are **only** available for producers in 16 States and are limited to payments for the scopes of crops, wild crops, and livestock. See subparagraph 1 D.

21 Eligible Applicants (Continued)

A Producers and Handlers (Continued)

Note: The payment calculation workbook will automatically determine whether national OCCSP or AMA OCCSP funds should be used based on a producer's location and scopes, the location of the County Office processing the application, and available funds.

Foreign persons and universities are eligible for OCCSP.

B Verifying Certification Status

To be eligible for OCCSP, applicants must have a valid organic certificate when their application is submitted.

Example: An operation pays organic certification expenses on April 1, 2018, submits a complete OCCSP application on June 1, 2018, and surrenders its organic certificate on June 15, 2018. The operation is eligible for 2018 OCCSP because it had a valid organic certification on the date it applied for OCCSP.

Before approving an OCCSP application, the County Office shall verify an applicant's organic certification status by:

- confirming that the operation is listed in the Organic Integrity Database at <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/Integrity/>
- contacting the certifying agent listed on the applicant's organic certificate if the operation is **not** listed in the Organic Integrity Database.

Note: FSA does **not** make determinations about whether a certified operation meets the requirements of the NOP or is following the Organic System Plan.

22 Eligible Scopes

A Overview

OCCSP payments are subject to payment caps based on the following 5 categories of certification expenses or "scopes":

- crops
- wild crops
- livestock
- handling/processing
- State organic program fees.

Each expense submitted for cost share assistance must be categorized according to the 5 scopes in this subparagraph.

22 Eligible Scopes (Continued)

B USDA Organic Certification Scopes

Organic operations may be certified for any combination of the following scopes identified in the NOP regulations:

- crops
- wild crops
- livestock
- handling/processing.

To be eligible for cost share assistance for any of these 4 scopes, the scopes **must** be listed on the operation's organic certificate.

FSA shall **not** review or make determinations about whether the organic certifier has included the correct scopes on an applicant's organic certificate. If an applicant believes they should be eligible for additional USDA organic certification scopes **not** listed on their organic certificate, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact their organic certifier and request that the additional scopes be added. FSA **cannot** provide cost-share assistance for scopes not listed on the organic certificate.

Notes: Some organic certificates may use “**categories**” or a similar term instead of “**scopes**.” Use of a different term for “**scopes**” does not affect the certified operation's eligibility.

--Industrial hemp may be certified as organic if produced according to applicable statutes and USDA regulations. See NOP guidance at--
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP%202040%20Hemp%20Instruction.pdf>. Producers of certified organic industrial hemp are eligible for OCCSP.

C State Organic Program Fees

State Organic Programs may be approved by the Secretary according to the requirements of the NOP. At this time, **only** California has an approved State Organic Program. Producers and handlers located outside of California do **not** incur State Organic Program fees and are **not** eligible to receive OCCSP assistance for this scope.

Some States are accredited by the NOP to act as organic certifying agents; however, this role is different than administering an approved State Organic Program. Amounts paid to a State agency for USDA organic certification services should be reported according to the appropriate scopes in subparagraph B.

23 Eligible Expenses

A Payment in Program Year

OCCSP eligibility is based on the date expenses are **paid** by the certified operation, rather than on the date the organic certification is effective.

Eligible expenses include **only** expenses that are **paid** from:

- October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017, for the 2017 program year
- October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, for the 2018 program year
- *--October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019, for the 2019 program year
- October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, for the 2020 program year
- October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, for the 2021 program year
- October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022, for the 2022 program year
- October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, for the 2023 program year.--*

Note: Expenses that have been **incurred** during the program year but **not paid** by the applicant are **not eligible** for cost share assistance.

Example: A certified organic producer is inspected by their certifying agent on September 1, 2017, and receives a bill from the certifier on September 15, 2017, indicating the amount due for certification services. The producer pays all expenses related to their certification on October 5, 2017. The producer may apply for cost share assistance for these expenses for the 2018 program year.

B Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Following are the **only** allowable costs accepted:

- application fees and administrative 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
- State Organic Program fees (applicable **only** in California)
- user fees or sale assessments
- postage.

23 Eligible Expenses (Continued)

B Allowable and Unallowable Costs (Continued)

Examples of unallowable costs include, but are **not** limited to:

- inspections because of violations to:
 - USDA organic regulations
 - State Organic Program requirements
- costs related to certification other than USDA organic certification

Note: Transitional certification programs are developed by third party certifiers and are **not** a USDA organic certification. Transitional certification is **not** eligible for OCCSP.

- costs related to any other labeling program
- materials, supplies, and equipment
- expediting fees
- late fees
- membership fees
- consultant fees.

*--C Questionable Invoice Costs

Certifiers can answer questions about eligible certification fees, and explain which fees are mandatory and which are optional. Each certifier has a unique fee schedule, which may use different terms to describe itemized expenses. If a certifier mandates certain fees, such as export certification, then those mandatory fees would be eligible for cost share reimbursement. If a certifier includes optional fees, such as consulting or application preparation, then those optional fees would not be eligible for reimbursement.

State and County Offices should contact the certifier headquarters office with questions about which fees are mandatory versus optional for that certifier. Some certifiers also publish fee schedules on their websites, which provide an explanation of itemized costs. Certifier contact information is publicly available at <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/Certifiers/CertifiersLocationsSearchPage.aspx>.--*

24-29 (Reserved)

Part 3 Application Process

30 Applying for Payment

A Application Periods

OCCSP program years will be on an FY basis. Producers and handlers may apply for OCCSP from:

- March 20, 2017, through October 31, 2017, or until funds for 2017 are no longer available, for the 2017 program year
- October 1, 2017, through October 31, 2018, or until funds for 2018 are no longer available, for the 2018 program year
- *--October 1, 2018, through October 31, 2019, or until funds are no longer available for the 2019 program year
- October 1, 2019, through October 31, 2020, or until funds are no longer available for the 2020 program year
- October 1, 2020, through October 31, 2021, or until funds are no longer available for the 2021 program year
- October 1, 2021, through October 31, 2022, or until funds are no longer available for the 2022 program year
- October 1, 2022, through October 31, 2023, or until funds are no longer available for the 2023 program year.--*

Note: Participating State agencies will establish their own application process and deadlines for producers and handlers.

Cost share assistance is provided on a **first come, first served basis**, until all available funds are obligated. Applications received after all funds are obligated will **not** be paid. The National Office will provide guidance to State Offices if funds are expected to become unavailable before the end of the application period.

30 Applying for Payment (Continued)

B Application Package

A complete application includes the following:

- a completed CCC-884
- USDA organic certificate

Notes: The format of certificates may vary by certifier.

Certificates do **not** expire.

- itemized invoice showing expenses **paid** to a certifying agent for certification services

Note: Records showing an amount due that do **not** indicate that payment has been made by the producer or handler will **not** be accepted.

- AD-2047, if not previously filed
- SF-3881, if not previously filed

Note: The policy allowing hardship waivers of the EFT requirement applies to OCCSP. See 63-FI.

- CCC-901, Part A, if not previously filed and the applicant is an entity.

***--Notes:** CCC-901 is required for legal entities to identify individuals with signature authority according to 1-CM. If the entity chooses not to provide a completed CCC-901, Part A, the legal entity must provide sufficient documentation to support the authority of the individual signing on behalf of the entity.

Apply the maximum payment per organic certificate and consider entities with separate certificates to be separate producers/handlers. For stores that have separate certificates for different locations, each location is considered a separate handler and may obtain up to \$750 per scope.--*

Additional documentation may be required by FSA if necessary to verify eligibility or issue the payment.

Notes: OCCSP applicants are **not** required to file an acreage report; however, County Offices may encourage producers who apply for OCCSP to file an acreage report to facilitate participation in other FSA programs and for use in their Organic System Plans.

Participating State agencies may develop their own application forms for OCCSP. FSA will **not** accept a State agency's OCCSP application form in lieu of CCC-884.

30 Applying for Payment (Continued)

C Submitting Applications

Applicants may submit OCCSP application packages to any County Office:

- in person
- by mail
- e-mail or FAX.

Notes: Questions from producers and handlers who have submitted an application shall be referred to the office that is processing their application.

If a County Office receives an OCCSP application from an applicant that is **not** located in their county, the office receiving the application should send the application to the County Office where the operation is located to be processed.

D Incomplete Applications

CCC representative **cannot** act on CCC-884 until the applicant has completed the application and signed Part C.

Note: Incomplete applications or applications that are **not** signed do **not** require action by FSA. Applicants will receive decisions by FSA **only** on complete applications.

County Offices shall notify an applicant that their application package is incomplete and give the applicant an opportunity to submit any additional required documentation before disapproving CCC-884. An example notification letter is provided in Exhibit 5.

E Late-Filed Applications

County Offices shall accept late-filed application packages after the application deadlines in subparagraph A. Authority to approve late-filed applications is delegated according to the following table.

IF the application is submitted...	THEN the late-filed application may be approved by the...
November 1 through December 31 of the following program year	CCC representative.
after December 31 through October 31 of the following program year	SED.
after October 31 of the following program year	DAFP.

30 Applying for Payment (Continued)

E Late-Filed Applications (Continued)

Examples: An applicant paid certification fees on September 29, 2018, during the 2018 program year, and filed CCC-884 on November 1, 2018. Although the application is filed after the 2018 program year deadline, the CCC representative will take action on the late-filed application.

An applicant paid certification fees on September 29, 2018, during the 2018 program year, and filed CCC-884 on May 1, 2019. Although the application is filed after the 2018 program year deadline, the SED will take action on the late-filed application.

Applicants who timely paid all certification expenses during the applicable program year, but did not receive their certification until after the application deadline can be approved as a late-filed request.

Funding is available on a **first come, first served basis**. Applications approved after all available funding has been obligated will **not** be paid.

F Amending or Withdrawing CCC-884

Applications may be amended or withdrawn at any time until the end of the application period; however, copies of all submitted CCC-884's **must** be kept in the file.

Applicants may, at any time during the application period, amend CCC-884 to:

- add additional scopes and/or certification costs
- remove scopes and/or certification costs from OCCSP.

Note: Applicants must repay all OCCSP payments received for any scope or certification costs if CCC-884 is withdrawn or amended to remove a scope or certification costs.

31 CCC-884

A Completing CCC-884

CCC representative shall complete items 1 and 16 through 18.

The producer or handler applying for OCCSP shall complete items 2 through 15.

Item	Instructions
1	Enter the County FSA Office name and address (including ZIP code).
Part A – Applicant Information	
2	<p>Enter the applicant's name.</p> <p>Notes: The applicant's name must be the name of the certified operation listed on the applicant's organic certificate. See subparagraph 21 A.</p> <p>A person or entity with multiple certified operations must submit separate CCC-884's for each certified operation for which they are requesting payment.</p>
3	Enter the applicant's address (including ZIP code).
4	<p>Select "yes" or "no" to indicate whether the applicant has recently participated in FSA programs.</p> <p>If "no" is selected, the applicant must also submit a completed AD-2047 and SF-3881 to receive payment.</p>
5	Enter the applicant's telephone number.
6	Enter the applicant's e-mail address.
Part B – Certification Information	
7	Enter the name of the certifier that issued the organic certification.
8	Enter the applicant's certification number/certifier ID.
9	Enter the current date of certification or date the certificate was issued.
10	<p>*--Enter the program year for which the applicant is applying for benefits.</p> <p>Example: The 2019 program year covers expenses paid between October 1, 2018, and September 30, 2019.</p> <p>Note: Separate CCC-884's must be completed for each program year.--*</p>

31 CCC-884 (Continued)

A Completing CCC-884 (Continued)

Item	Instructions
11	<p>Check the appropriate box(es) for the scope(s) of activity and enter the associated costs for each scope selected.</p> <p>For costs that apply to more than 1 scope, divide the amount by the number of all scopes for which the cost was incurred.</p> <p>Note: Only certified organic operations in California are eligible for cost share assistance for State Organic Program fees. Although some State programs operate as organic certifiers and charge certification fees, only California operates a unique State Organic Program that imposes fees in addition to *--certification expenses.--*</p>
12	<p>Check “yes” or “no” to indicate whether the applicant has applied for cost share assistance through a participating State agency for the program year in item 10 and scopes in item 11.</p> <p>Note: Applicants cannot receive duplicate OCCSP payments for the same scope in the same program year through both FSA and a State agency.</p>
Part C – Applicant Certification Statement	
13	Applicant signature.
14	<p>Enter applicant’s representative title/relationship to the entity or individual.</p> <p>Note: If applicant is not signing in a representative capacity, this field should be left blank.</p>
15	Enter the date the form is signed.
Part D – CCC Representative Approval or Disapproval	
16	CCC representative signature.
17	Check action taken on the application (approve or disapprove).
18	Date the CCC representative took action on the application.

31 CCC-884 (Continued)

B Example of CCC-884

Following is an example of CCC-884.

* --

This form is available electronically		Form Approved - OMB No. 0560-0289 Expiration Date: 03-31-2020	
CCC-884 (03-08-19)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Commodity Credit Corporation ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (OCCSP) (For 2017 and Subsequent Years)	
NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is 7 CFR Part 205, the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.), the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq. - as amended), the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq. - as amended), the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171), and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334). The information will be used to determine applicant ability to participate in and receive benefits under the Organic Certification Cost Share Program. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated). Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination that the applicant is unable to participate in and receive benefits under the Organic Certification Cost Share Program. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0289. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.		1. County FSA Name and Address (including Zip Code)	
PART A APPLICANT INFORMATION			
2. Applicant Name	3. Applicant's Address (including Zip Code)	4. Have you recently participated in FSA programs? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (If "NO", please fill out an AD-2047 and SF-3881)	5. Applicant's Phone Number (including Area code)
			6. Email Address
PART B CERTIFICATION INFORMATION			
7. Name of Organic Certifier		8. Certification Number/Certifier Client ID	9. Current Date of Certification/Certificate Issued
10. Enter the program year (OCCSP program years are based on the fiscal year in which expenses are paid). See instructions for the specific dates covered by each program year. _____			
11. Scope of Activity (Check all that apply) and Associated Costs:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Crops \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> State Organic Program Fees (CA Only) \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Crops \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Processing/Handling \$ _____		
12. Have you applied for cost share funds with your State for the program year in Item 10 and for the Scopes selected in Item 11? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (If "YES", you will be ineligible for cost share benefits with FSA.)			
<p><i>In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.</i></p> <p><i>Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.</i></p> <p><i>To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.</i></p>			

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31 CCC-884 (Continued)

B Example of CCC-884 (Continued)

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PART C APPLICANT CERTIFICATION STATEMENT			
<p><i>Each applicant must submit a complete application to an FSA county office to be eligible to receive program benefits. A complete application includes form CCC-884, a copy of the applicant's organic certificate, itemized documentation of certification expenses paid by the applicant, and forms AD-2047 and SF-3881 if not previously filed with FSA. By signing this application, applicant:</i></p>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees to provide FSA any documentation required to determine eligibility and to verify and support all information provided, including applicant's organic certificate; 2. Understands the application may be disapproved if the applicant fails to provide a complete application or any information requested by FSA; 3. Agrees to comply with, and acknowledges the applicant is subject to, all provisions of OCCSP as published in the Notice of Funds Availability published in the Federal Register, and all applicable rules and regulations; 4. Understands that OCCSP payments are provided on a first come, first served basis until all available funds are obligated, and applications received after all funds are obligated will not be paid; 5. Acknowledges that if determined eligible and funding is available, the applicant will receive the lesser of \$750 per scope of activity or 75 percent of the applicant's certification cost, which may be adjusted from the amount entered in Item 11 to reflect eligible allowable costs indicated by the documentation submitted to support the application. 			
<p>I certify that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The above information provided by me or my legal representative is true and correct. 2. I understand that failure to provide true and correct information may result in the invalidation of this application, a determination of noncompliance or ineligibility, or other remedies or sanctions. 3. I understand that I may not receive duplicate benefits for the same scope of activity and program year from both a State Agency and FSA. If it is determined that I have received duplicate benefits, I have no right to retain those payments. 			
13. Applicant's Signature (By)	14. Title/Relationship of the Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity	15. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	
PART D CCC REPRESENTATIVE APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL			
16A. CCC Representative's Signature (or Designee)	16B. Title of Representative or Designee	17. Action: <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVED	18. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)

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32 Required Documentation

A Applicant Responsibilities

Application packages are **not** complete and CCC-884 **cannot** be approved unless applicants have provided documentation to support the scopes and associated costs entered on CCC-884. The applicant is responsible for providing documentation for the associated costs for each selected scope in a manner that can be understood by the CCC representative.

B County Office Responsibilities

County Offices shall follow this table when receiving and reviewing documentation.

Step	Action
1	Date stamp original hard copy documentation. Ensure receiving county name is identified.
2	Photocopy original date-stamped documentation submitted by the applicant.
3	Place photocopied data-stamped documentation in the applicant's file.
4	Return original date-stamped documentation to the producer. Note: The original date-stamped documentation can only be returned to the applicant if the photocopies have been made and placed in the applicant's file.
5	Review the applicant's file for previously submitted documentation. Ensure that documentation has not been duplicated.
6	Review all documentation provided by the applicant and determine whether the documentation is acceptable.

Note: State and County Offices shall **not** use unapproved forms, worksheets, applications, or other documents to obtain or collect the data required from applicants to complete CCC-884.

Part 4 Payment

Section 1 Payment Provisions

40 Payment Amount

A Overview

OCCSP payments **must** be calculated separately by scope and will be equal to the lesser of:

- the total allowable certification costs times 75 percent
- \$750 per scope.

Before calculating the payment amount, County Offices must review documentation and verify the total allowable costs. Any costs that are included by the applicant on CCC-884 that are ineligible for cost share must be excluded from the total allowable costs used to calculate the payment.

Each eligible expense must be assigned to 1 of the 5 scopes. If a single expense is incurred for more than 1 scope, the amount shall be divided by the number of applicable scopes and the result shall be applied to each applicable scope when calculating a payment.

B Limitations

A certified operation is limited to a maximum payment of \$750 per scope for the program year. Persons or entities with more than one certified operation (such as more than one organic certificate) may receive an OCCSP payment of up to \$750 per scope for each operation.

Certified operations+ **cannot** receive a cost share payment for the same scope in the same year from both FSA and a State agency. State agencies will report applicant information to the National Office, and the National Office will determine whether duplicate payments have been made. OCCSP applicants who have received duplicate payments will be required to return the amount of any duplicate payment to FSA.

C Sequestration

Sequestration will be applied to the total amount of funding available for OCCSP * * * if required by law. It will **not** be applied after individual payment amounts are calculated.

41 General Provisions

A Obtaining FSA-325

FSA-325 shall be completed, according to 1-CM, by individuals or entities requesting payments **earned** by a producer who has died, disappeared, or been declared incompetent subsequent to applying for program benefits. Payments shall be issued to the individuals or entities requesting payment using the deceased, incompetent, or disappeared producer's ID number.

Note: If CCC-884 has been filed by the producer, a revised CCC-884 is **not** required when payments are issued under the deceased, incompetent, or disappeared producer's ID number.

B Administrative Offset

OCCSP payments issued by FSA are subject to administrative offsets.

C Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy status does **not** exclude a producer from requesting OCCSP benefits. **Contact the OGC regional attorney for guidance on issuing OCCSP payments on all bankruptcy cases.**

D Assignments and Joint Payments

County Offices shall process assignments and joint payments according to 63-FI.

E Payment Due Date

The online payment system sends the date entered in subparagraph 50 B, Step 5, to NPS as the payment due date.

F Processing Payments

OCCSP payments shall be issued as soon as **all** of the following conditions exist:

- The applicant has provided all required program documentation
- CCC-884 is approved.

41 General Provisions (Continued)

G Payments Less Than \$1

OCCSP payments shall:

- be issued when payments round to at least \$1
- be issued in whole dollars
- **not** be issued when payments are less than 50 cents.

H E-Funds Access

Funding will be maintained at the State level and will **not** be allotted to individual counties; therefore, State Office specialists will **not** need access to the following program funds.

AMA OCCSP funding is established with the following accounting and program codes.

Scope	Accounting Code	Program Code
Crops	6140	XXAMACROP
Wild Crops	6140	XXAMAWILD
Livestock	6140	XXAMALIVE

National OCCSP funding is established with the following accounting and program codes.

Scope	Accounting Code	Program Code
Crops	6150	XXNATCROP
Livestock	6150	XXNATLIVE
Wild Crops	6150	XXNATWILD
Handling/Processing	6152	XXNATFEEHAND
State Organic Program Fees	6152	XXNATFEESOP

*--To report funding errors, e-mail **all** of the following:

- Mary Sebben at **mary.sebben@usda.gov**
- Kay Niner at **kay.niner@usda.gov**
- Jennifer Fiser at **jennifer.fiser@usda.gov**
- Lenior Simmons at **lenior.simmons@usda.gov**.*

41 General Provisions (Continued)**I Submitting Payment Problems**

If there is an issue with an OCCSP payment, State Office specialists should update the *--applicable information to the OCCSP section list on the payment problem SharePoint--* website at https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/mgr/dafp/PECD/Payment_Issues/default.aspx.

J Providing State Office Access to the Payment Problem SharePoint Site

State Office specialists should request access to the payment problem SharePoint website by e-mailing a request to either of the following:

- Tina Nemec at tina.nemec@usda.gov
- Tracey Smith at tracey.smith@usda.gov.

42-44 (Reserved)

Section 3 Processing Payments

50 Entering OCCSP Payments

A Background

Amounts calculated using CCC-884A will be recorded through OLP, according to 1-FI, Part 3.

B Recording Payment

County Offices shall issue the OCCSP payments through OL, according to this table.

Reminder: OCCSP payment amounts shall **not** be issued through OLP until all documentation requirements have been met and the producer's CCC-884 is approved according to Part 3.

Step	Action	Result
1	Access "Online Payment Home Page" according to 1-FI, Part 3.	The Online Payment page will be displayed.
2	CLICK "Create Payment" on the Online Payment page.	The Create Payment-Customer Search Screen will be displayed.
3	<p>On the Create Payment - Customer Search Screen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> select the State and county enter the program code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLICK "SCIMS", enter TIN and select TIN type CLICK "Next". <p>Notes:*--A producer must operate under the same name and TIN for all their farming operations with FSA to be eligible for OCCSP reimbursement.--*</p> <p>The program code is provided in CCC-884A, item 12.</p> <p>AMA OCCSP program codes will not be accepted by OLP after October 1 of the following program year. For payments being issued after October 1, a revised payment calculator worksheet will be released that only provides national OCCSP program codes.</p> <p>Example: A producer in 1 of the 16 AMA-eligible States submits a complete application package on September 30, 2018, but the payment is not entered in OLP until November 2, 2018. The County Office shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the revised payment calculator worksheet to calculate the payment amount enter only national OCCSP programs codes and not AMA OCCSP program codes into OLP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLICK "Select". 	The SCIMS Customer Search page will be displayed.

50 Entering OCCSP Payments (Continued)

B Recording Payment (Continued)

Step	Action	Result
4	SELECT the applicable producer on the SCIMS Customer Search page.	The Create Payment-Payment Entry Screen will be displayed.
5	<p>On the Create Payment-Payment Entry Screen enter the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • payment amount <p>Note: The payment amount is provided in Item 11 for the corresponding program code in CCC-884A, Item 12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm amount – same as payment amount • issue date – enter date payment is to be issued • prompt payment due date – enter date • application number – ENTER “0001” • CLICK “Add”. 	The Create Payment-Payment Detail Screen will be displayed.
6	<p>A confirmation message will be displayed that “Payment has been successfully created. This payment request must be certified and signed in NPS.”</p> <p>PRESS “OK” on the Create Payment – Payment Detail Screen.</p>	The Create Payment – Customer Search Screen will be displayed.

Letter Notifying Applicant of Disapproval

The following is an example of a letter to an applicant notifying them that their application has been disapproved and providing appeal rights. An MS Word version of this letter is available as a *--template at https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/occsp/index.--*

[Date]

Mr. Organic Farmer
1400 Independence Avenue
Anytown, USA 12345-9876

Dear Mr. Farmer:

This letter is in response to your Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) application for the [insert year] program year.

FSA has processed your application; however, we have determined you are not eligible for a payment because [insert description of basis for disapproval].

If you believe we have not properly reviewed your application, you may appeal this determination to the county committee by filing a written request no later than 30 days after you receive this notice in accordance with the FSA appeal procedures found at 7 CFR Part 780. If you appeal to the county committee, you have the right to an informal hearing which you or your representative may attend either personally or by telephone. If you appeal this determination to the county committee, you may later appeal any adverse determination of the county committee to the FSA State committee or the National Appeals Division. To appeal, write to the county committee at the following address and explain why you believe this determination is erroneous.

Somewhere County FSA Committee
55 Main St.
Somewhereville, USA 12345-6789

If you do not timely file an appeal of this determination, this shall be the final administrative determination with respect to this matter in accordance with regulations at 7 CFR 780.

Sincerely,

Sharina Farmer
County Executive Director

Letter Notifying Applicant of Incomplete Application Package

The following is an example of a letter to an applicant notifying them that their application package was incomplete and additional information is needed to process their application. An MS Word *--version of this letter is available as a template at https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/program-areas/dafp/special-programs/occsp/index.--*

[Date]

Mr. Organic Farmer
1400 Independence Avenue
Anytown, USA 12345-9876

Dear Mr. Farmer:

This letter is in response to your application for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) for the [insert year] program year.

FSA has received form CCC-884; however, we have determined that your application package is incomplete. Please submit the following information and/or documentation to FSA so that we may process your application:

- [List additional documentation needed]

Please submit the requested information by [insert program year deadline]. If the requested information is not received by [insert program year deadline], your application will be disapproved. Please contact us at your earliest convenience if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sharina Farmer
County Executive Director

