

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

**Organic Certification Cost Share Program
1-OCCSP**

Amendment 7

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



Amendment Transmittal

A Reasons for Amendment

Subparagraph 21 A has been amended for clarity on late-filed requests.

Subparagraph 22 B has been amended to update the link to AMS NOP guidance on hemp.

Subparagraph 30 E has been amended to update the examples.

Subparagraph 50 C has been amended to update the instructions to match the example of determining OCCSP payment information.

Exhibit 1 has been amended to update the redelegations of authority.

Page Control Chart		
TC	Text	Exhibit
	2-1, 2-2 2-3, 2-4 3-3, 3-4 4-43, 4-44	1, page 1, 2

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 paid certification expenses during the applicable program year but did not receive their certification until after the application deadline, their application can be approved as a late-filed request if that request is submitted by December 31 of the following applicable program year.--

Operations with suspended, revoked, or withdrawn certifications at the time of application are ineligible for cost share reimbursement.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

Notes: 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.

For the 2020 program year, AMA funds will not be used for payments by County Offices.

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, 2020, submits a complete OCCSP application on June 1, 2020, and surrenders its organic certificate on June 15, 2020. The operation is eligible for 2020 OCCSP because it had a valid organic certification on the date it applied for OCCSP.

Before approving an OCCSP application, the County Office must 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:** County Office shall document their findings in the COC minutes.--*

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 (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, 2019, and receives a bill from the certifier on September 15, 2019, indicating the amount due for certification services. The producer pays all expenses related to their certification on October 5, 2019. The producer may apply for cost share assistance for these expenses for the 2020 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.

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 will be referred to the office that is processing that application.

If a County Office receives an OCCSP application from an applicant that is **not** located in their county, the office receiving the application must 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 will notify an applicant that their application package is incomplete and give ~~the~~ applicant 30 days from the date of notification to submit any additional required ~~documentation~~ documentation before disapproving CCC-884. An example notification letter is provided in Exhibit 5.

E Late-Filed Applications

County Offices will accept late-filed application packages after the application deadlines in subparagraph A if the application is filed by December 31 of the following program year.

CCC-884's, and any required information and documentation for CCC-884, submitted after December 31 of the following program year will be received by the County Office and placed in the producer's file.

COC will immediately notify the producer in writing that:

- the application was not filed timely
- assistance cannot be paid.

Note: The letter advising any producer that CCC-884 **cannot** be paid **must** include the basis for the determination and a right of reconsideration according to 1-APP. The right of reconsideration is limited to providing facts and evidence that CCC-884 was not timely filed.

30 Applying for Payment (Continued)

E Late-Filed Applications (Continued)

***--Examples:** An applicant paid certification fees on September 29, 2020, during the 2020 program year, and filed CCC-884 on December 31, 2020. Although the application is filed after the 2020 program year deadline, SED will act on the--* late-filed application.

An applicant paid certification fees on September 29, 2020, during the 2020 program year, and filed CCC-884 on January 15, 2021. The application is filed after the 2020 program year deadline, as well as after the December 31, 2020, late-filed deadline, and cannot be processed.

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 if that request is submitted by December 31 of the following applicable program year.

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.

50 Entering OCCSP Payments (Continued)

C Example of Determining OCCSP Payment Information

The following is an example of a worksheet for a county in Hawaii that includes the scopes of crops and processing/handling.

*--

CCC-884A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Commodity Credit Corporation		1a. County FSA Name Kalawao County		1b. State HI		2. Program Year (from CCC-884, Item 10) 2020									
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM MANUAL PAYMENT WORKSHEET FOR 2020 AND SUBSEQUENT PROGRAM YEARS				3. Applicant Name (from CCC-884, Item 2) Any Producer		4. Applicant's State HI									
				5. Scope (Check all that apply) (From CCC-884, Item 11)		6. Total Associated Costs		7. Ineligible Costs		8. Total Allowable Costs (Item 6 - Item 7)		9. Allowable Costs x 50% (Item 8 x 50%)		10. Maximum Payment Amount	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crops		\$750.00				\$750.00		\$375.00		\$500.00		\$375.00		20NATCROP	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Crops										\$500.00					
<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock										\$500.00					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Processing/Handling		\$933.00				\$933.00		\$466.50		\$500.00		\$466.50		20NATFEEHAND	
<input type="checkbox"/> State Organic Program Fees (CA only)										\$500.00					
13A. Signature of Preparer				13B. Title of Preparer				13C. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)							
14A. Signature of 2 nd Party Reviewer				14B. Title of 2 nd Party Reviewer				14C. Date Signed (MM-DD-YYYY)							

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The following table provides the steps that would be followed in OLP for the scope of “Crops” based on the example above.

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	On the Create Payment – Customer Search Screen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select the State and county •*--ENTER program code – 20NATCROP--* • CLICK “SCIMS”, enter TIN and select TIN type • CLICK “Next” • CLICK “Select”. 	The SCIMS Customer Search page will be displayed.

50 Entering OCCSP Payments (Continued)

C Example of Determining OCCSP Payment Information (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	On the Create Payment – Payment Entry Screen ENTER the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •*--payment amount – \$375.00 • confirm amount – \$375.00--* • 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	PRESS “OK” on the Create Payment – Payment Detail Screen.	The Create payment – Customer Search Screen will be displayed.

The following table provides the steps that would be followed in OLP for the scope of “Processing/Handling” based on the example above.

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	On the Create Payment – Customer Search Screen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select the State and county •*--ENTER program code – 20NATFEEHAND--* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLICK “SCIMS”, enter TIN and select TIN type • CLICK “Next” • CLICK “Select”. 	The SCIMS Customer Search page will be displayed.

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority

Reports

None

Forms

This table lists all forms referenced in this handbook.

Number	Title	Display Reference	Reference
AD-2047	Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change		30, 31, 33
CCC-884	Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)	31	Text
CCC-884A	Organic Certification Cost Share Program Manual Payment Calculation Worksheet	46	2, 33, 45, 50
CCC-901	Member’s Information Agricultural Act of 2014		30, 33
FSA-325	Application for Payment of Amounts Due Persons Who Have Died, Disappeared, or Have Been Declared Incompetent		41
SF-3881	ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form		30, 31, 33

Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM

The following abbreviations are not listed in 1-CM.

Approved Abbreviation	Term	Reference
AMA	Agricultural Management Assistance	1, 2, 21, 41, 45, 50
DBA	Doing Business As	21
NOFA	Notice of Funds Availability	2, 3
NOP	National Organic Program	1, 21, 22, 34, Ex. 2
OCCSP	Organic Certification Cost Share Program	Text
OLP	Online Payments	1, 50, 55
OTIS	Outreach Tracking Information System	3

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority

Redelegations of Authority

This table lists the redelegations of authority in this handbook.

Redelegation	Reference
* * *	* * *
SED is delegated authority to approve late-filed CCC-884's if filed by December 31 of the following program year.	Subparagraph 30 E
--CED may redelegate responsibility to PT for approving timely-filed-- CCC-884's.	Subparagraph 33 B