

**For:** State and County Offices

**National Organic Training**

**Approved by:** Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

Notice OCCSP-1 announced FSA will begin administration of the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) together with continuing to offer cooperative agreements to State departments of agriculture. Starting March 20, 2017, FSA will begin accepting OCCSP applications from producers and handlers through FSA County Offices.

To educate FSA field employees on the importance of organic farming to local communities and provide information necessary to administer OCCSP, FSA has scheduled training that will cover a wide variety of topics related to organic certification and FSA programs available to organic producers. The training will prepare FSA field office staff to train other FSA employees and to deliver OCCSP.

**B Purpose**

This notice informs State and County Offices about the 2017 national organic training and provides detailed information on:

- dates and location
- hotel accommodations
- transportation and travel authorizations.

**C Contacts**

If there are questions about this notice, contact Rhonda Pudwill-Munier by e-mail at [rhonda.pudwill@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:rhonda.pudwill@wdc.usda.gov)

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
April 1, 2017	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice OCCSP-2

### 2 Organic Training

#### A Train-the-Trainer Approach

The national organic training content has been designed using the train-the-trainer model. Training attendees will be responsible for delivering training to applicable FSA employees in their respective States.

The training sessions will include lectures, panels, and interactive discussions. Presenters will provide training and communication materials to all training participants to support the training of others in their respective States.

Training participants who have a Government laptop are required to bring their laptop to the training to view materials, which will be available on or before March 3, 2017, at the web site <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/dafp/training/default.htm>.

**Note:** Training participants are encouraged to download the training materials on their laptop **before** attending the national training. Participants who need paper copies of materials are instructed to print and bring them as needed.

#### B Training Dates and Location

The training sessions will begin on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, at 8 a.m. and end Thursday, March 9, 2017, at noon. Attendees are **not** authorized to make airline reservations that would require them to leave the training session **before** the scheduled end time.

The training will be held at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center Milwaukee, WI. See subparagraph 3 C for detailed hotel information.

#### C State Training Attendee Slots

States are authorized to send a total of 2 participants to the training. Participants shall include:

- the program specialist responsible for administration of OCCSP
- either of the following:
  - FSA State organic champion
  - outreach specialist.

**Note:** If a single employee serves as the OCCSP program specialist, FSA State organic champion, or the outreach specialist, States may select a second employee to attend the training if appropriate. States are not authorized to send more than 2 participants.

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### 2 Organic Training (Continued)

#### C State Training Attendee Slots (Continued)

State Offices shall identify the training participants by:

- COB March 1, 2017
- posting applicable information to the following SharePoint [https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/mgr/dafp/training\\_events/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/mgr/dafp/training_events/SitePages/Home.aspx).

#### D Training Topics

Training is anticipated to include the following:

- organic certification overview
- OCCSP administration policy and procedures
- overview of FSA programs and resources available to organic growers
- organic outreach activities.

### 3 Travel and Hotel Authorizations

#### A Travel Authorization

Participants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, as soon as possible, using the most efficient means of transportation. This notice does **not** constitute an approved travel authorization.

Each employee **must** have a CONCUR electronic travel authorization **before** incurring travel expenses. Once in the CONCUR authorization page, enter the following information on the “General” tab:

- type code – single trip
- purpose – training
- document detail – OCCSP national training.

**Important:** Travelers who do **not** have a valid Government-issued travel credit card may use the centrally billed account (CBA) option in CONCUR for purchasing airfare.

To reserve **hotel accommodations**, travelers shall contact the hotel and secure reservations using their personal credit card. Only airfare can be paid on behalf of travelers using CBA. Hotel accommodations are paid using the traveler’s personal credit card, and subsequently reimbursed to the traveler as part of per diem during the post-travel expense vouchering process.

## Notice OCCSP-2

### 3 Travel and Hotel Authorizations (Continued)

#### A Travel Authorization (Continued)

**M&IE** may also be charged to the traveler's personal credit card for reimbursement through the post-travel expense vouchering process.

Travelers whose circumstances may require using a **cash advance** may notify a member of the travel staff prior to initiating a travel authorization. A traveler may request an advance of up to 80 percent of estimated travel expenses (excluding airfare).

For questions about using CBA or a cash advance, contact either of the following in the Debt Management and Travel Policy Office:

- Arthur Holmes by e-mail to [arthur.holmes@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:arthur.holmes@wdc.usda.gov)
- Cynthia Chesley by e-mail to [cynthia.chesley@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.chesley@wdc.usda.gov)
- NaStasha DeCook by e-mail to [nastasha.decook@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:nastasha.decook@wdc.usda.gov).

**Note:** Travelers whose circumstances require using cash advance **must** notify their CONCUR federal agency travel administrator (FATA) before initiating a travel authorization.

#### B Travel Codes

All travel expenses associated with this trip shall be coded to the Washington-directed travel accounting codes. In CONCUR:

- National Office (GS) employees must select travel/accounting code **171717-HQ-WDC-TRAVEL**
- State Office (GS) employees must select the travel/accounting code **171717-STO-WDC-TRAVEL**
- County Office (CO) employees must select the travel/accounting code **171717-COF-WDC-TRAVEL**.

#### C Hotel Accommodations

A block of rooms have been reserved at the:

Hilton Milwaukee City Center  
509 West Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
414-271-7250.

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### 3 Travel and Hotel Authorizations (Continued)

#### C Hotel Accommodations (Continued)

The per diem rate for lodging is \$119 and M&IE is \$64. To receive the government per diem rate, rooms must be reserved using the following information.

- Group Name: Organics Training
- Per Diem Rate: \$119 per night
- Check-In: March 6, 2017
- Check-Out: March 10, 2017.

Make reservations using the hotel's online group reservations system at [https://secure3.hilton.com/en\\_US/hi/reservation/book.htm?inputModule=HOTEL&cityhocr=MKEMHHF&spec\\_plan=OT&arrival=20170305&departure=20170311&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT](https://secure3.hilton.com/en_US/hi/reservation/book.htm?inputModule=HOTEL&cityhocr=MKEMHHF&spec_plan=OT&arrival=20170305&departure=20170311&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT)

Confirm room reservations with a government credit card or equal to the first night room charge as soon as possible but no later than COB Friday, March 3, 2017. After this date any rooms not confirmed will be released to hotel inventory.

Check-in time is **3 p.m.** and check-out time is **noon**. In the event that a reservation needs to be cancelled the participant must notify the hotel 48 hours before the date of check-in to avoid a cancellation fee. Any reservation cancelled less than 48 hours before check-in will result in the participant's credit card being charged a minimum of one night's stay and tax. For all no-shows the policy will be the same. Also, guests must advise the hotel at or before check-in of any change in the scheduled length of stay to avoid a \$75 early departure fee.

#### D Hotel Transportation Options

Transportation from area airports to the Hilton Milwaukee City Center is available by any of the following:

- taxicab from Mitchell Airport is approximately \$25 one way
- Uber from Mitchell Airport is approximately \$11 to \$15 forUberX and \$19 to \$25 for UberXL.

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### 4 Additional Training Information

#### A Reasonable Accommodations

Participants may notify the airline and hotel directly if special accommodations are necessary.

If special accommodations are necessary to attend this training, notify Kym Pritchett by February 28, 2017, by either of the following:

- e-mail to **kimberly.pritchett@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone to 202-384-8605.

#### B Documenting Training Attendance in WebTA

Report activity in the Activity Reporting System section of WebTA using the following.

- OCCSP training – program code “Organic Certification C/S” with activity code “training”
- other FSA training – applicable program code with activity code “training”
- travel – program code “Organic Certification C/S” with activity code “travel”.

#### C Subsequent In-State Training Sessions

State training for OCCSP must be completed before March 20, 2017.

The State training for OCCSP may be conducted by live meeting, conference call, or other similar method.

**Note:** State training **must** include OCCSP policy and procedures. State training is **not** required to include the background information on organic certification and other FSA programs presented at the national organic training; therefore, it will **not** be necessary to have multiple-day training meetings for OCCSP within the State.