



July 2024

Dear Pennsylvania, Certified Organic Operator,

We hope this letter finds you well, the following are a few updates that may be of interest to you.

The USDA Farm Services Agency announced the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) as part of USDA's broader effort to support organic producers and in response USDA/FSA will cover up to **75% of costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 maximum**. This year the Farm Service Agency increased the cost share amount, which helps organic producers cover organic certification costs, to the maximum amount allowed by statute.

USDA certified organic operations that are certified or receiving continuation of certification during the period **October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024**, by a USDA-accredited certifier, may apply for the cost share reimbursement.

A copy of your certificate or renewal certificate is no longer required for the cost share application; however, your certificate number must be entered on the enclosed application. If you are not certified thru Pennsylvania Certified Organic, please arrange for your approved certifier to supply information to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, a copy of your invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with your completed application. This information is necessary to verify costs and process your application for reimbursement. If you are certified thru PA Certified Organic, we will verify all information with them. In addition, we require that you enter the County your farm or business is in. Please fill out the application completely to avoid it being rejected.

All completed applications must be postmarked by **October 31, 2024**, and mailed to:

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Market Development
ATTN: Michele L. Brookins
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Applications are also available online at agriculture.pa.gov/agbiz and may be submitted by email no later than **October 31, 2024**. Please note, you will also need to submit your proof of payment, if you aren't certified thru PCO. All applications can be completed electronically and emailed to RA-AgBusiness@pa.gov, once you send by e-mail, please follow up with a phone call at 717-787-5319.

We recommend completing your application in its entirety as soon as possible as reimbursements will be made on a **first come, first serve basis, while funds are available**. If you have any questions, please contact Michele Brookins at mbrookins@pa.gov, by phone at (717) 787-5319, **please do not submit your application to mbrookins@pa.gov**, please submit all applications via regular mail or e-mail to RA-AgBusiness@pa.gov.

Thank you for your continued support of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture as we work to build a sustainable agricultural industry for farmers, consumers and businesses.