

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)
OMB Control Number: 0560-0289

FSA is requesting a 3-year approval on this information collection.

1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid. Certain State agencies also submit applications to FSA to administer OCCSP in their States.

FSA provides cost-share assistance, through FSA county offices and participating state agencies, to organic producers and, in the case of NOCCSP, to organic handlers. Recipients must receive initial certification or continuation of certification according to the USDA NOP regulation (7 CFR part 205) from a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Reimbursement is currently available at 75 percent of an operation's certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 per year per certification category (crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling, transitional, and State Organic Program fees). The information collected from these respondents is needed to ensure that program recipients are eligible for funding and comply with applicable program regulations. Data collected is the minimum information necessary to effectively carry out the requirements of each program.

The National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program (NOCCSP) is authorized under section 10606(d)(1) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 7901 note), as amended by section 10004© of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 113-79). Under this authority, FSA is authorized to provide organic certification cost-share assistance in 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories. AMA funding is authorized under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA), as amended, (7 U.S.C. 1524). Under the applicable FCIA provisions, FSA is authorized to provide organic certification cost-share assistance in sixteen states: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Producers cannot receive duplicate payments for costs through both AMA and NOCCSP.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used.

Grant Agreement Face Sheet (Agreement Face Sheet). The Agreement Face Sheet lists the agreed upon responsibilities of FSA project work. It includes the agreed upon grant funding dollar amounts and the beginning date and ending date of the project work and the grant agreement. One copy of this Agreement Face Sheet is required to be returned to FSA with the date and grantee's signature(s).

The two SF forms included in this information collection are common forms and the burden will be

accounted for with Request for Comment Forms (RCFs). The burden for these common forms is not included in this information collection.

SF-270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0012) is required for state agencies whenever the grantees request an advance or reimbursement of Federal grant funds. The information will be used by FSA to make and keep track of grant advances and disbursements. The information is obtained electronically. While the burden of these forms is not covered by this OMB control number, we have described them in the supporting statement to give a full picture of the program requirements.

SF-425, "Federal Financial Report," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0014) is required for state agencies semi-annually to report grantee expenditures. The information will be used by FSA to determine the financial status of the State's grant projects. The information is obtained electronically. SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0004) is required to apply for federal assistance. The information will be used by FSA to determine the eligibility for state agencies to participate in these programs. The information can be obtained electronically and is required to be collected electronically through www.grants.gov. While the burden of these forms is not covered by this OMB control number, we have described them in the supporting statement to give a full picture of the program requirements.

The Narrative Report is required annually for state agencies to describe program activities undertaken throughout the funding period. The following items are addressed:

- a. Outreach activities carried out by the State and/or subrecipients, including the methods used to identify potential applicants, means of contact with potential applicants, and outreach materials for distribution, i.e. publications, announcements press releases, etc.;
- b. Problems or obstacles related to reimbursement, program administration, outreach, etc. during the reporting period; and
- c. Explanation for any denial of requests for reimbursement.

Spreadsheet of Operations Reimbursed is required for state agencies semi-annually to list the producers receiving cost-share payments, the total cost of their certification expenses, and the amount paid within the reporting time period. The information can be obtained electronically and will be collected electronically.

Form W-9-Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification is used to verify the TIN for producers with IRS for purposes of issuing the SF-1199. The W-9 is collected by State agencies but is not collected by FSA.

The form of CCC-884 is an ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (OCCSP) application for the producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP payments.

The producer or handlers must provide a proof of USDA organic certification.

The producers or handlers must provide documentation of itemized invoices of paid expenses to a third party certifying agent for certification services.

The producers or handlers who apply through an FSA county office are required to provide information on AD-2047-Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Records Change (Internal Use only) complete by the FSA County staff. FSA uses AD-2047 to get the TIN which FSA verifies with IRS to issue the SF-1199.

The producers or handlers requires to complete SF-1119A, Direct Deposit Signup form to get OCCSP payments from FSA.

2. Use of information technology.

All the standard forms can be obtained and submitted electronically at the <http://www.grants.gov>. The SF-270-Request for Advance or Reimbursement, SF-1119A Direct Deposit Sign-up Form, SF-425-Financial Report, and W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification are available at <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms>. The narrative report and spreadsheet of operations reimbursed can be prepared electronically and submitted electronically. FSA needs to have an original signature and will be collected by mail.

CCC-884-Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) is also available at <https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>. The AD-2047-Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change is for internal use only and not available electronically in the public. The respondents need to contact the County office to provide those information on AD-2047.

The information on OCCSP is also available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp>.

1. Efforts to identify duplication.

The program is not maintained by any other Agency; therefore, the requested information will not be available from any other existing records.

2. Method to minimize burden on small businesses or other small entities

FSA estimates about 8,000 respondents that are small entities or small businesses in this collection. This collection of information will not have an adverse impact on these entities. The information that producers or handlers provide to participate should be readily available with their existing organic certification (e.g., copy of USDA organic certificate) or other business records (e.g., W-9).

3. Consequences if information collection were less frequent

Without this collection of information, FSA would not be able to award grant funds to eligible producers/handlers and states agencies.

4. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO REPORT INFORMATION TO THE AGENCY MORE OFTEN THAN QUARTERLY;** Respondents are not required to report more than quarterly.
- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO PREPARE A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO A COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IN FEWER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF IT;** Respondents are not required to prepare a written response to a collection of information fewer than 30 days after receipt.
- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT MORE THAN AN ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES OF ANY DOCUMENT;** Respondents are not required to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.
- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO RETAIN RECORDS, OTHER THAN HEALTH, MEDICAL, GOVERNMENT CONTRACT, GRANT-IN-AID, OR TAX RECORDS FOR MORE THAN 3 YEARS;** Respondents are not required to retain any records for more than 3 years.
- **IN CONNECTION WITH A STATISTICAL SURVEY, THAT IS NOT DESIGNED TO PRODUCE VALID AND RELIABLE RESULTS THAT CAN BE GENERALIZED TO THE UNIVERSE OF STUDY;** The information collected will not be utilized in connection with a statistical survey.
- **REQUIRING THE USE OF A STATISTICAL DATA CLASSIFICATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY OMB;** There is no requirement for a statistical data classification.
- **THAT INCLUDES A PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED IN STATUE OR REGULATION, THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY DISCLOSURE AND DATA SECURITY POLICIES THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE PLEDGE, OR WHICH UNNECESSARILY IMPEDES SHARING OF DATA WITH OTHER AGENCIES FOR COMPATIBLE CONFIDENTIAL USE; OR** No confidential information is collected.
- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT PROPRIETARY TRADE SECRET, OR OTHER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION UNLESS THE AGENCY CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT IT HAS INSTITUTED PROCEDURES TO PROTECT THE INFORMATION'S CONFIDENTIALITY TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.** Respondents are not required to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information. There are no other circumstances.

5. Federal Register notice, summarization of comments and consultation with persons outside the Agency

The 60-day Federal Register notice regarding this information collection requesting for public comments was published on October 4, 2019 (84 FR 53100-53101). No comments were received.

The following 3 persons were contacted. The comment was that the forms and instructions are clear, concise, and easy to complete. One person mentioned that the Standard Forms should be online

submissions but aware it will take a while to implement it. One person mentioned to consider the instruction to provide when to complete and submit the form, not how to complete the form.

- a. Scott Przygocki, 860-713-5199, scott.przygocki@cit.gov.
- b. Heather Barnes, 919-707-3127, heather.barnes@ncagr.gov.
- c. Devin Dowell, 360-902-1805, ddowell@agr.wa.gov.

6. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondent

There would be no payment or gift rendered to any respondent.

7. Confidentiality provided to respondents

The data that is collected is handled according to established FSA procedures for implementing the Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts. This information collection complies with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB Circular A-130, Responsibilities for the Maintenance of Records about Individuals by Federal Agencies.

8. Questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions being requested that are of a sensitive nature. The information we are seeking is directly related to business activities as they relate to the OCCSP.

12. Estimates of burden.

Estimates of the hour burden of collection of information have been summarized on the enclosed FSA-Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements.

Respondent annual costs in the enclosed Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements: For the state agencies and producers/handlers, the respondents' estimated annual cost in providing the information is \$710,360 (rounded).

13. Total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no capital and start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with the information collection.

14. Annual cost to Federal Government.

The estimated annual cost for FSA to operate OCCSP is \$486,700 per year.

Administration of OCCSP is currently conducted by 1 full time GS-12 employee who is responsible for all aspects of the grant program from pre-award to closeout, including processing state reports and reimbursement requests and supporting reporting to Congress and others. FSA county employee cost per response is equal to 0.5 hours for processing the application form and payment multiplied

by \$21.45 (estimated county employee average hourly wage, based 2020 General Schedule, Grade 7, Step 7). A total employer compensation costs (fringe benefits) for all government workers averaged \$7.20, 37%, per hour worked from Bureau of Labor Statistics website, specifically in the document of the employer costs for employee compensation, September 2018. The total annual cost for FSA county employees is \$171,900 ($\$21.45 + \$7.20 \times 0.5 \text{ hours} \times 12,000 \text{ responses}$).

Outreach is also an important part of program activities to ensure that certified organic operations are aware that funding is available. Grant program oversight and policy management is provided on a part time basis by one GS-14 supervisor and one GS-15 supervisor. Further back-up and support is provided throughout the year on a part time basis by one GS-13 Program Specialist, as necessary. The travel budget is for the employees to attend appropriate conferences to support outreach work. The Contracts/Services budget includes training for the employees to keep up-to-date with developments in Federal grants management and for special projects such as website upgrades and attendance of conferences that promote the program. The remaining line items are for administrative expenses and overhead.

Salaries/Benefits/Awards	\$ 486,700
Travel	\$ 36,500
Contracts/Services	\$ 4,500
Printing/Copying/Mailing	\$ 20,500
Total	\$ 548,200

15. Reasons for changes in burden.

The burden hours increased by 28,290 hours since the last OMB approval. The reason for the increase is due to increased participation in the NOP. There is also a decrease of -7000 hours due to the removal of the travel time from this request. The respondents go to the county offices to do regular and customary business with FSA for OCCSP; this means no travel times is required specifically for the information collection and therefore, it is no longer included in the burden hour reporting.

16. Tabulation, analysis and publication plans.

FSA is required to submit an annual report to Congress providing a state-by-state overview of: (1) funds used by each state, (2) funds reimbursed to certified organic farms and businesses, and (3) the number of certified organic operations and businesses served.

17. Reasons display of expiration date of OMB approval is inappropriate.

FSA displays the OMB number and an expiration date on the form.

18. Exceptions to 83-1 certification statement.

FSA is able to certify compliance with all provisions under Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

No statistical methods of collecting information will be employed in this information collection.