

Alabama USDA May Newsletter

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Alabama USDA Newsletter - May 2023

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USDA's Organic Certification Cost Share Program Assists Organic Producers recover costs associated with organic certification

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organic certification, up to \$750 per category, through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and handlers to apply for OCCSP by Oct. 31, 2023, for expenses incurred from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.



As part of USDA's broader effort to support organic producers and in response to stakeholder feedback, this year FSA increased the cost share to the maximum amount allowed by statute.

Cost Share for 2023

The cost share provides financial assistance for organic certification, and producers and handlers are eligible to receive 75% of the costs, up to \$750, for crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees (California only).

Producers have until Oct. 31, 2023, to file applications, and FSA will make payments as applications are received.

How to Apply

To apply, organic producers and handlers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). As part of completing the OCCSP application, producers and handlers will need to provide documentation of their organic certification and eligible expenses.

Organic producers and handlers may also apply for OCCSP through department of agriculture. Additional details can be found on the [OCCSP](#) webpage.

Opportunity for State Departments of Agriculture

FSA is also accepting applications from state departments of agriculture to administer OCCSP. FSA will post a synopsis of the funding opportunity on grants.gov and will electronically mail the notice of funding opportunity to all eligible state departments of agriculture.

If a state department of agriculture chooses to participate in OCCSP, both the state department of agriculture and FSA County Offices in that state will accept OCCSP applications and make payments to eligible certified operations. However, the producer or handler may only receive OCCSP assistance from either FSA or the participating state department of agriculture.

USDA Seeks Members for Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production



Nominations open until July 15

USDA is seeking nominations for four positions on the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Nominations will be open to public from May 15, 2023, to July 15, 2023. The 12-member Committee, which assembled in March 2022, is part of USDA's efforts to increase support for urban agriculture and innovative production. Members of the committee provide input on policy development and to help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country. Learn more <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2023/usda-seeks-members-for-federal-advisory-committee-for-urban-agriculture-and-innovative-production>

Join us for the People's Garden anniversary! Sign up your garden in Alabama



*Gardens are invited to join the 1,250 strong
People's Garden community*

The People's Garden community is growing! Last May, USDA renewed the People's Garden initiative. On the anniversary of the reopening we invite you to join approximately 1,200 People's Gardens that have signed up nationwide in the past year by registering on [the USDA People's Garden website](http://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden).

Community gardens, urban farms, school gardens, and small-scale agriculture projects in rural, suburban and urban areas can join the "People's Garden" community.

We invite you to:

- **Join** the People's Garden community.
- **Grow** using sustainable practices that benefit people and wildlife.
- **Teach** about local, resilient food systems.
- People's Gardens are marked on a map on the USDA website and may be featured in USDA communications. You'll receive a People's Garden sign to display and learn about People's Garden community information such as webinars.

Sign up at www.usda.gov/peoples-garden



Alabama USDA

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