



## PCO Certification Fee Schedule- 2024

PCO envisions a world where agricultural systems prioritize health, ecological balance, fairness and care. We support this vision by streamlining the certification process and upholding our high level of customer service so your business can continue to grow and impact our communities.

The certification fees uphold our commitment to maintaining a simple fee schedule, expanding our service offerings to meet client requests, and to remain competitive within the industry. Transparency is important to us, so you will find that all fees related to certification are outlined below.

A. Program Fees	Organic Certification Program Fee:		Amount:	Description
	Basic Certification Fee - Renewing Client		\$835	Annual fee which covers your basic certification services for the upcoming certification season
	Affiliate Certification Fee - Renewing Client		\$350	Annual fee which covers your basic certification services for the upcoming certification season. This fee is for renewing livestock affiliates with one central administration and sales exclusive to one operation.
	New Applicant Fee		\$935	Includes processing of application for all new applicants (including new affiliates) and the basic certification services for the upcoming certification season.
	Sales Assessment		see chart below	This fee is calculated on your annual gross organic sales for farming, handling and processing operations in the previous year.
	Type of Organic Operation/Scope Fee:		Amount:	Description
	Livestock		\$250	Applies to operations certifying any type of livestock
	Processor / handler / broker / distributor		\$350	Applies to operations certifying processor, handler, broker or distributor scope (s)
	Additional Organic System Plan (OSP)		\$300	Applies to operations with more than one OSP of the same scope
	International Export		\$250	Applies to operations exporting organic products or that request verification that organic products meet the terms of an equivalency arrangement
Other Certification Program Fee:		Amount:	Description	
Organic Plus Trust (OPT) Certified Grass-fed Organic Livestock Program		\$300	Applies to operations requesting certification to the OPT Grass-fed Program	
Material Review Fee:		Amount:	Description	
Material Review Fee (for reviews beyond two new submissions per year for each operation):		\$100	Single-ingredient material review	
		\$250	Multi-ingredient material review up to 20 ingredients. For products with 20+ ingredients \$250 + PCO hourly rate	

**Sales Assessment Tiers:** The sales assessment fee is calculated on your annual gross organic sales for farming, handling and processing operations in the previous year.

Tier	Gross Organic Sales	Fee	Tier	Gross Organic Sales	Fee
1	\$0 - \$5,000	\$0	14	\$750,001 - \$1,000,000	\$3,300
2	\$5,001 - \$25,000	\$70	15	\$1,000,001 - \$1,500,000	\$4,650
3	\$25,001 - \$40,000	\$210	16	\$1,500,001 - \$2,500,000	\$6,000
4	\$40,001 - \$55,000	\$300	17	\$2,500,001 - \$3,500,000	\$8,500
5	\$55,001 - \$75,000	\$390	18	\$3,500,001 - \$5,000,000	\$9,000
6	\$75,001 - \$100,000	\$540	19	\$5,000,001 - \$7,500,000	\$11,070
7	\$100,001 - \$130,000	\$660	20	\$7,500,001 - \$10,000,000	\$13,200
8	\$130,001 - \$165,000	\$750	21	\$10,000,001 - \$15,000,000	\$16,730
9	\$165,001 - \$210,000	\$830	22	\$15,000,001 - \$20,000,000	\$22,000
10	\$210,001 - \$275,000	\$1,075	23	\$20,000,001 - \$30,000,000	\$25,000
11	\$275,001 - \$400,000	\$1,400	24	\$30,000,001 - \$50,000,000	\$32,000
12	\$400,001 - \$500,000	\$1,740	25	\$50,000,001 - \$100,000,000	\$40,000
13	\$500,001 - \$750,000	\$2,420	26	\$100,000,001 and up	\$45,000

**Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)**

pco@paorganic.org • [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org) • 106 School Street, Ste 201 • Spring Mills, PA 16875 • 814.422.0251 • fax 814.422.0255

PCO Certification Fee Schedule V23, 12/4/2023

	Fee:	Amount:	Description
<b>B. Inspection Fees</b>	Inspection Hourly Rate	\$80 / hour	Hourly rate includes time spent pre-inspection, onsite, and post inspection
	Inspection Travel time	\$40 / hour	Hourly rate includes time traveling to and from inspection location
	Inspection expenses	Actual cost	Examples include mileage, rental car, airfare, meals, overnight mail, and any other inspection related expenses
	Inspection canceled by client	Expenses incurred up to the time it was canceled plus \$165 administrative fee	Applies to inspections canceled for non-justified reasons 5 days or less from the time of the scheduled inspection, or if a cancellation request is not communicated to the inspector
<b>C. Administrative Fees</b>	Application Forms	No charge	
	Expedited Application	\$3,000	Additional fee for top priority application processing (including OPT Grassfed Certification); this includes new affiliate operations. If more than one scope is being applied for, the additional scope(s) are charged the expedited additions fee below
	Expedited Addition	\$1,500	Additional fee for existing clients requesting top priority to add a new scope, field/land, new site, and/or new facility location or for new applicants requesting expedited certification in more than one scope
	Expedited Product Review	\$350 per product	Review within 5 business days
	Expedited Export Certificate	\$150 per certificate	Review within 2 business days
	Investigation Cost Recovery	Actual costs	Hourly rates to be billed for each type of service rendered. Rates may include inspection rates (listed above) or other services at PCO's hourly rate (listed below), including applicable legal expense. See Investigation Cost Recovery section below for more information.
	Late Paperwork Submission	\$150 / month	Annual Update more than 10 days past due date
	Late payment	1.5% interest per month	More than 30 days past due date
	Returned Check Fee	\$30 plus bank fees	For each time a check is returned as unpaid, for any reason
	Payment Plan	5% of balance	Assessed on balance to be paid over extended period
	Postal Fee	\$400	Annual fee to cover the additional services for clients electing for postal correspondence
	Mediation	Informal: \$225 (non technical); \$550 (technical) Formal: All costs assumed by applicant / certified client	For mediation resulting from a proposed suspension or other adverse action; due upon PCO acceptance of request for mediation
	Reinstatement	\$500	For operations with suspended NOP organic certification who are requesting reinstatement
	PCO Hourly Rate	\$165 per hour	For Circumstances not otherwise covered in this fee schedule; Minimum of 1 hour is billed - Examples Include but are not limited to: Pre-Application OSP Review, Document Transcription, Bulk Mail Requests, PCO staff attendance at events

## Description of Fees and Refund Policy

### Organic Certification Program Fees:

- **Basic Certification Fee - Renewing Client:** This fee covers your basic certification services for the upcoming certification season, including review of your certification documents for compliance with the regulations. It includes the PCO certification manual, material lists and 2 annual material review requests, newsletter, and educational events & materials at no additional charge. You also have direct access to a certification specialist's expertise via phone, mail or email. This fee is invoiced at the beginning of each calendar year. Operations must inform PCO that they wish to surrender by the annual update paperwork due date to avoid fees.
- **Affiliate Certification Fee - Renewing Client:** This fee is for renewing livestock affiliates with one central administration and sales exclusive to one operation. It covers the basic certification services for the upcoming certification season as listed above.
- **New Applicant Fee:** This fee is applicable to all new operations applying for organic certification with PCO. It covers the processing of the application for all new applicants (including new affiliates) and the basic certification services for the upcoming certification season as listed above. Payment for new applicants must be submitted before the application will be reviewed.

### Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)

pco@paorganic.org • [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org) • 106 School Street, Ste 201 • Spring Mills, PA 16875 • 814.422.0251 • fax 814.422.0255

- **Sales Assessment:** The sales assessment fee is calculated on your annual gross organic sales for farming, handling and processing operations in the previous year. You will receive an invoice for these fees after we receive your application or annual update. No sales assessment is charged to operations with \$5,000 or less of organic sales. Organic sales will be verified at the time of inspection. PCO reserves the right to adjust the sales assessment charge based on information gathered at any time. If you are an operation with multiple activities listed below, report the figure for the activity that makes up 50% or more of your organic sales.

1. If you are an operation that purchases and sells organic product(s), but you do not further process it, calculate the difference between the purchase and sales price of the organic products that you are certifying with PCO, and report that value.
  - a. For example, broker/distributors and operations that only re-package organic product
2. If you are an operation who requires certification for purchased product(s) but is claiming an exemption from certification for product sold, record the purchase price of product that you are certifying with PCO, and report that value.
  - a. For example, a brand owner that purchases bulk retail packaging provided to co-packers who only sell the sealed retail label packages.
3. If you are an operation that is paid a fee for services related to an organic product, report the income from the service fee
  - a. For example, operations that co-pack, handle and/or produce organic product, and do not “sell” products but are paid a fee for the service, this fee is assessed on the gross income obtained from handling or processing organic products

- **Type of operation:** Additional fees will be assessed for the type of operation (e.g. Livestock, Processor/Handler) if requesting certification in other scopes. These fees cover the additional time, paperwork, complexity, inspector assignment, and reviewer expertise required to certify operations that are more complex than those within the crops scope of certification.

- **Material Review Fee:** A fee for clients and new applicants who submit more than two materials that have not been reviewed by PCO or a Material Review Organization. This covers the time for the additional material review beyond what is already listed in the PCO Materials List and the material lists that are available through Material Review Organizations:

- Organic Materials Review Institute: [www.omri.org/omri-lists](http://www.omri.org/omri-lists), (541) 343-7600
- Washington State Department of Agriculture: <https://agr.wa.gov/departments/organic/input-material-registration>, (360) 902-1800
- California Department of Food and Agriculture: [https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer\\_OIM.html](https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer_OIM.html), (916) 900-5022

#### Inspection Fees:

- **Annual and Initial Inspections:** Operations are required to have at least one inspection per calendar year as part of their certification. The final cost for inspection can be highly variable from year to year. Part of the variance is based upon the complexity of the operation inspected and the ability to group with other nearby inspections. Operation complexity may consist of things like operation size, number of scopes to be certified, length of time certified, number of certified products and whether your operation has open compliance issues. Other factors that may affect inspection length include, but are not limited to, whether the operation takes part in organic international trade, whether uncertified production or handling also takes place onsite, or whether on-farm post-harvest handling occurs onsite, etc. PCO works hard to coordinate inspections in geographic regions to minimize travel time and expenses. You can lower your costs by promptly communicating with your inspector to schedule your inspection, organizing records and materials prior to the inspector’s arrival, and offering your full attention to the inspection while the inspector is onsite with you.

The inspection fee includes the inspector’s time spent in preparation for, execution of, and final production of the inspection report. In addition, travel expenses including time, transportation costs, lodging, meals, etc. will be assessed. Inspections may be announced or unannounced. PCO reserves the right to send multiple inspectors to complete inspections for large-scale or high risk operations.

#### Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)

pco@paorganic.org • [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org) • 106 School Street, Ste 201 • Spring Mills, PA 16875 • 814.422.0251 • fax 814.422.0255

To help provide an estimate for inspections, scope specific inspection averages are listed below. Note: that actual inspection time and travel expenses may be outside of the range due to the factors mentioned above.

Inspection Based on Type of Scope(s)	Average Inspection Range
Producer - Single Scope	\$425 - \$800
Producer - Multiple Scopes	\$500 - \$925
Processor/Handler - Single Scope	\$550 - \$1,300
Processor/Handler - Multiple Scopes	\$675 - \$1,500

• **Supplemental Inspections:** Supplemental inspections may be required through the year for different reasons: As compliance verification: Additional inspections may be required for operations unable to demonstrate adequate compliance during the annual inspection. These inspections may be scheduled or unannounced. Operations will be responsible for the additional inspection costs.

To add certifications to existing certified operations: Additional inspections required to add new fields, sites, or facilities outside of the annual inspection will be billed to the certified operation. These inspections will be scheduled with an assigned inspector. Operations will be responsible for the additional inspection costs.

- **Unannounced Inspections and Residue Sampling:** All certified operators are subject to unannounced inspections and/or product sampling for residue detection. No fees are assessed for unannounced inspections, *with the following exceptions:*
  - If terms of a settlement agreement require that unannounced inspections are conducted over a specified period of time.
  - If the operation requires additional oversight based on ongoing investigations, noncompliances noted in Certification Reports, or adverse actions.
  - If the operation was unable to demonstrate adequate compliance during the annual or initial inspection, as documented by the inspector in the most recent inspection report.

In these cases, unannounced inspection fees will be passed to the client. PCO does not pass the residue sampling costs to the client, but we reserve the right to do so regarding issues of documented noncompliance.

- **Inspection Cancellations:** If you cancel a scheduled inspection with less than 5 days' notice (from the date of the scheduled inspection), you will be assessed the inspector's preparation time, reimbursable expenses (travel, lodging, etc.) that have been incurred for the planned trip, as well as an administrative fee stated in table above. If the inspector is in route, the client will be billed for travel time, in addition to the above listed costs. You will be responsible for rescheduling the inspection and paying all additional associated inspection and travel fees.

**Administrative Fees:**

- **Expedited Certification:** PCO offers a nonrefundable expedited certification service for those operations who have critical timing needs. This expedited fee is in addition to any applicable organic certification program fees and inspection fees as described above. Applications must be complete upon submission. Complete applications that are requesting certification within 45 business days of submission will require expedited services. Payment for expedited services must be submitted before the application will be reviewed or the inspection will be coordinated. While expedited services do not guarantee certification will be granted by a specified date, your certification request will receive priority processing and inspection assignment.

The success of the expedited service lies in your ability to comply with the National Organic Program and your timely responses to requests for information. If you enroll in the expedited services program, PCO provides the following:

- Application/Updated certification information receives expedited attention for initial review.
- Inspection will receive prioritized attention for assignment.
- The inspection report will be submitted within five (5) business days of the Exit Interview.
- PCO will review the inspection report within five (5) business days and identify any outstanding issues to grant certification.
- Expedited fee is per scope. If more than one scope is being applied for, the additional scope(s) are charged the expedited addition fee.

Certification cannot be guaranteed by a certain date and PCO has the right to refuse service for expedited requests if we do not have the administrative capacity to do so. In some cases, requests for this service may be outside of a geographical area in which we normally do business, require input manufacturer cooperation, or may be at a high-volume service period. In these cases, PCO will communicate if we are unable to meet your request of expedited service.

- **Expedited Product Review:** Rush review does not guarantee approval. PCO staff will review each product requested for review within five (5) business days. This fee is charged per product. A product review includes new products including labels and revisions to existing products including labels. Non-expedited product review requests are typically reviewed by PCO staff within ten (10) business days.

- **Expedited Export Certificate:** Rush review does not guarantee approval. PCO staff will review your export certificate request within two (2) business days. This fee is charged per export certificate request. This includes EU COIs, Korea NAQS, Japan TM-11, Transaction Certificates, etc. Any product reviews needed for export certificate approval will also be charged an expedited product review fee. Non-expedited export certificate requests are typically reviewed by PCO staff within ten (10) business days.

- **Investigation Cost Recovery:** Applicants and clients are responsible for reimbursing PCO for all costs incurred by PCO as a result of adverse actions, investigations, and legal issues involving the applicant or client. Adverse actions may include but are not limited to: actions described in Section Four, including sanctions, adverse actions, complaints, appeals, mediation, litigation, or enforcement actions. When PCO performs an investigation, which may or may not include inspection(s), and identifies noncompliance(s), the applicant or client **may** be responsible for the associated costs of the investigation, including conducting additional inspection(s). The costs that the applicant or client must reimburse include, but are not limited to: the costs of conducting mediation, investigations, conducting additional inspections, conducting discovery, additional monitoring and oversight in the context of a settlement agreement, and responding to subpoenas or other discovery requests. Costs are billed at the PCO hourly rate above. The associated costs may be billed either when PCO closes the investigation or when a proposed adverse action(s) is issued. The costs recovered are based on the amount of time it took to conduct the investigation, and may include review of investigation related evidence, inspection reports, and meetings.

- **Reinstatement Fee:** A reinstatement request often demands the dedication of considerable staff hours. Therefore, those operations who have been suspended from USDA NOP and are in need of reinstatement to the National Organic Program are assessed a Reinstatement Fee which covers staff time that is not considered part of a normal certification request. This fee is in addition to all other certification and inspection fees.

- **PCO Hourly Rate:** Where possible, PCO strives to list all of our standard fees within this fee schedule; however, there may be rare situations in which we need to apply an hourly rate for our services. Examples include, but are not limited to, reviewing a new client's organic system plan prior to the client submitting an application, transcribing paper documents to electronic format, bulk mail requests, and requesting PCO staff attendance at events.

**Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)**

**Refund Policy:** Currently certified operations wishing to surrender their certification or new applicants withdrawing their application may be eligible for a partial refund. Refunds for certified operations are based on fees paid in the current calendar year and due date of annual update paperwork. Refunds for new applicants are based on the initial review. Only Organic Certification Program fees (section A) may be eligible for a partial refund. All Inspection fees (section B) and Administrative fees (section C) are non-refundable.

Scenario:	Client / Applicant Refund:
Surrender of Certification before March 1	75% of Organic Certification Program fees (section A)
Surrender of Certification after March 1 and before May 1	50% of Organic Certification Program fees (section A)
Surrender of Certification after May 1	No refund
Withdraw of Application prior to initial review	50% of Organic Certification Program fees (section A)
Withdraw of Application after initial review	No refund
Certification is Denied, Suspended, or Revoked	No refund
PCO unable to fulfill expedited request	PCO will keep payment as a credit and refund balance after inspection has been conducted or refund if applicant withdraws application.

**Non-Payment of Invoices:** If an operation has an invoice that becomes greater than 60 days past due and has not arranged or is not abiding to a payment plan, the operation will be issued a noncompliance. If the Non-Compliance is not resolved, a Notice of Proposed Suspension would be issued. If you are issued a Notice of Proposed Suspension for non-payment of fees, you may not correct the issue by simply paying the past due balance. Additional paperwork and information will be required in order to avoid suspension of your certification (e.g. Mediation Request Form to PCO or Appeal to NOP). PCO reserves the right to turn over uncollected fees to a third-party collection agency in the event of non-payment. The operation is responsible for any collection agency fees.

**Cost Estimate:** Using the information provided in this fee schedule, the below table can be used to create an estimate for your operation each year as required by regulation §205.642.:

Fee Type:	Amount:
Application Fee (New Applicant Only)	\$
Basic Certification Fee - Renewing Client	\$
Affiliated Livestock Operation - Renewing Client	\$
Sales Assessment (if previously or currently certified)	\$
Program Fee(s) if applicable (e.g. scope type, export, etc.)	\$
Inspection Fee (based on averages for similar operations)	\$
Administrative Fee(s) if applicable (i.e. postal fee, reinstatement, etc.)	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>

**Organic Certification Cost Share Program:** Certified clients are eligible for reimbursement of up to 75% of certification fees per each scope. For example: If certified for crops and dairy, each of which is considered a category (or scope) you would qualify for up to 75% reimbursement for each scope, not to exceed \$750 per category, per year. Contact your local FSA office or participating state agency to apply for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

This fee schedule is effective January 1, 2024 and supersedes any prior fee schedule.

**Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)**

pco@paorganic.org • [www.paorganic.org](http://www.paorganic.org) • 106 School Street, Ste 201 • Spring Mills, PA 16875 • 814.422.0251 • fax 814.422.0255