

## Transition to Organic Partnership Mentor Description & Requirements

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) is actively seeking experienced and knowledgeable certified organic producers who are passionate about organic production and interested in sharing their expertise with others. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to guide and support producers who are transitioning to organic, providing them with valuable insights, practical advice, and industry best practices. By becoming a mentor, you will play a crucial role in helping new organic producers succeed and contribute to the growth of the organic movement in our region.

As a mentor, you will be paired with a similar producer transitioning to organic, you will have regular meetings and check-ins, and provide your expertise with organic production to help them succeed in their organic venture. This is a paid mentorship opportunity, including paid training, mentorship time, and travel time. All crop and livestock producers are welcome to apply!

### Responsibilities

All mentor responsibilities can be completed in person or virtually:

- Mentor at least one producer transitioning to organic for one year, with an option to renew mentorship annually
- Complete 5 hours of mentor training annually
- Provide 40 hours of mentorship each year (optional additional hours with additional mentees), including:
  - Complete onboarding with mentee and mentorship coordinator
  - Host mentee at least once on your own operation
  - Visit mentee's operation at least once
  - Lead monthly meetings with mentee
  - Participate in program evaluations
  - Complete quarterly check-ins with the mentorship coordinator
  - Answer mentee's emails and phone calls in a timely manner
  - Track mentorship hours and activities
  - Recommended to attend at least one educational event with mentee
  - Suggested to present at or host an educational event

### Qualifications

- Owners, managers, employees, or retired producers of certified organic operations with

at least 3 years of direct experience with organic certification

- Ability to fulfill the time commitment of mentorship including communication, site visits (virtual or in person), and researching solutions
- Willingness to engage in problem solving, and a desire to give-back to the organic production community
- Strong understanding of the rules, challenges, and benefits of organic production and becoming certified organic
- Open to inviting mentee and other program participants to your operation either in person or virtually
- Preferred experience in a teaching, supervising or mentor role

### **Benefits**

- \$3,000 stipend for each mentorship year you participate (additional stipend for mentors with more than one mentee)
- Applicants with language skills beyond English may be eligible for additional compensation
- Paid professional development on professional and interpersonal skills, organic regulations, and organic production practices
- Develop teaching and facilitation skills
- Take part in supporting the growing network of organic producers!

### **To Apply**

For more information and applications for the TOPP Mentorship Program, visit

[www.organictransition.org](http://www.organictransition.org).

Unsure if you want to directly participate in mentorship? Complete the General Interest Form and learn additional ways you can participate at the USDA TOPP website:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp>.

For additional inquiries about the TOPP program or to receive a paper form application, please contact PCO at 814-422-0251 or fax your interest to 814-422-0255.