



Federal Farm Bill Call To Action

February 4th, 2025

In a last-minute effort to avoid a government shutdown, Congress passed a spending package in December of 2024 that extends the U.S. Farm Bill for another year. However, this legislation leaves out critical funding for key organic programs, including the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Despite its relatively small cost—just over \$10 million annually for all USDA Certified Organic producers nationwide—OCCSP and other vital organic initiatives were omitted from the \$500-billion Farm Bill. This decision jeopardizes the future of organic farming, leaving thousands of farmers and businesses in a precarious position.

The USDA's Organic Cost Share Program has long been a lifeline for organic producers, covering up to 75% of certification costs (up to \$750 per category). Since its inception in 2002, this program has supported countless PCO-certified organic farmers. However, recent years have seen funding cuts, rising certification costs, and now, the complete defunding of the program, creating an uncertain future for many in the organic industry.

For months, organic farmers and advocates have urged Congress to secure funding for three essential programs critical to the organic industry's success:

- 1. The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP): *Now defunded***, this program helped offset certification costs for farms and businesses. Without it, producers face rising certification expenses in 2025, which could lead some operations to abandon certification altogether.
- 2. The Organic Data Initiative (ODI):** This program provides vital data to support organic agriculture, helping businesses meet the growing demand for organic products. Its absence will deprive producers of critical insights needed to remain competitive.
- 3. The Organic Certification Trade and Tracking Program (OCTT):** A lack of resources for technology infrastructure will severely impact the USDA's ability to enforce organic regulations and combat fraud. These cuts are especially ill-timed, as the USDA begins implementing new

Strengthening Organic Enforcement rules requiring import certificates to address fraudulent imports.

Failing to fund these programs threatens the integrity and growth of the organic sector. PCO stands alongside organizations such as OTA and NOC in urging Congress to address this oversight and restore essential funding. Farmers and processors are also [urged to contact their legislators and advocate for the reinstatement of these vital programs](#). The future of organic farming depends on swift action.

Learn more about PCO Certification Services fees and the Organic Cost Share Program at <https://paorganic.org/certification>