



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Pursuant to Texas Agriculture Code, sections 12.002 and 91.009, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) hereby requests applications for the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program designed to assist Texas producers with the cost of organic certification.

PROGRAM AUTHORITY

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(c) of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill; Pub. L. 113-79). Under this authority, Congress authorizes USDA to provide organic certification cost share assistance to certified organic operations (producers and handlers) located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. Territories.

Approximately \$230,000 is available for Texas organic producers, handlers and/or processors under the NOCCSP to fund FY 2015 applications received in accordance with this initial announcement.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be a Texas-based business that produces organic crops. Operations must possess current USDA organic certification to be eligible to receive reimbursements. This means operations either must have successfully received their initial USDA organic certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agent, or must have incurred expenses related to the renewal of their USDA organic certification from a USDA-accredited certifying agent between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015. Operations with suspended or revoked certifications are ineligible for reimbursement. The applicable NOP regulations and resources for certification are available on the NOP website at www.ams.usda.gov/nop.

Organic producers (crops, wild crops, and/or livestock) and/or handlers are eligible to participate in the NOCCSP.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Applications must be complete and have all required documentation to be considered. Applications missing documentation or otherwise deemed incomplete will not be considered for funding until sufficient information has been received by TDA. Information not received by the application deadline will not be considered.

Organic Operation Certification Costs.

Allowable Costs	Unallowable Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application fees• Inspection costs• First-time USDA NOP certification fees• Travel costs/per diem for organic inspectors• User fees/ sales assessments• Postage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Late fees• Inspections due to violations of NOP regulations• Any charges related to certifications other than USDA organic• Transitional certifications• Materials and supplies• Equipment

Payments are limited to 75% (seventy-five percent) of an individual producer's certification costs, up to a maximum of \$750 (seven hundred and fifty dollars) per certificate or category of certification, per year. Eligible operations may receive one reimbursement per year per certificate or category of certification (if one certificate includes multiple categories). Each certificate may be reimbursed separately. Likewise, each category of certification may be reimbursed separately.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.

Applications will be accepted beginning May 2015, and must be submitted on the form provided by TDA. The application (GTBD-167) is available on TDA's website at www.TexasAgriculture.gov, or available upon request from TDA by calling (512) 463-6695. Applications must be submitted to TDA headquarters in Austin, Texas. If mailing the application, please make sure it is in a properly addressed envelope, bearing sufficient postage. To be considered, applications must be signed/certified by the applicant and include required supporting documentation.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES

LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Applicants must submit one complete, signed application. The application packet must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CST) on Friday, October 30, 2015**. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit all materials necessary early enough to ensure timely delivery. Applications may be submitted electronically, hand-delivered or mailed. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Electronic submission of applications is preferred, and should be sent via email to:

Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov

The e-mail subject line must reference the RFA title and applicant (Ex: 2015 Organic – ABC Co.). The applicant is solely responsible for ensuring that their complete application, regardless of method of delivery, is sent to, and actually received by, TDA in a timely manner and at the proper destination server. TDA will send a confirmation email once the application has been received.

IMPORTANT NOTE: TDA recommends a limit on the attachments to 10MB each. This may require applicants to submit one application in multiple e-mails, so that all required attachments may be submitted without exceeding TDA's 10 MB attachment limit. Applicants must make sure that each email subject line references the RFA title and applicant. Unreadable submissions may be deemed unresponsive and will not be reviewed for funding consideration.

TDA takes no responsibility for electronic submissions that are captured, blocked, filtered, quarantined or otherwise prevented from reaching the proper destination server by any TDA anti-virus or other security software.

Hard copy submissions are permitted.

All applications must be **received** by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CST) on Friday, **October 30, 2015**. Applications will be documented with a date/time stamp for receipt documentation purposes.

Applications may be sent to TDA at either of the following addresses:

By U.S. Mail:

Texas Department of Agriculture
Trade & Business Development- Grants
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, TX 78711

By Overnight or Hand Delivery

Texas Department of Agriculture
Trade & Business Development- Grants
1700 North Congress, 11th Floor
Austin, Texas 78701

For questions regarding submission of the proposal and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office, at (512) 463-6695, or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.

Texas Public Information Act. Once submitted, all proposals shall be deemed to be the property of the TDA and are subject to the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552 (PIA).

GENERAL INFORMATION

All grant awards are subject to the availability of appropriations and authorizations by the Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA and TDA.

Right to Amend or Terminate Program

TDA reserves the right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if TDA deems any such action to be in the best interest of TDA and of the State of Texas. The decision of TDA will be administratively final in this regard.

Proprietary Information/Public Information

The Applicant is responsible for clearly designating any portion of the application that contains proprietary or trade secret information and must state the reason(s) the information is designated as such. Merely making a

blanket claim the entire application is protected from disclosure because it contains proprietary or trade secret information is not acceptable, and shall make the entire application subject to release under the PIA.

In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall process such request in accordance with § 552.305 of the Texas Government Code. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel regarding disclosure issues and to take appropriate precautions to safeguard trade secrets or any other proprietary information.

All applications submitted under this program are subject to release as public information, unless the application or specific parts of any such application can be shown to be exempt from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.

Conflict of Interest

The Applicant is required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to this grant program. Failure to disclose any such relationship may result in the Applicant's disqualification or termination of agreement.

GENERAL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

1. Grantee (a recipient of a grant) must comply with TDA's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the Grantee to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by TDA and shall not relieve the Grantee of its responsibilities to TDA for their performance.
2. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funds appropriated and authorized by the Texas Legislature.
3. Grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.
4. Grantees must keep separate records and a bookkeeping account (with a complete record of all expenditures) for a project. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the three-year retention period, then all records and accounts must be retained until their destruction is authorized by TDA. TDA and the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project, including all electronic records, at any time throughout the duration of the agreement until all litigation, claims, negotiations, audits or other action pertaining to a grant is resolved, or until the expiration of the three-year retention period or a final judgment in litigation, whichever is longer. TDA and the SAO shall have access to: all electronic data or records pertaining to the grant project; the physical location where records are stored; and all locations related to project activities.
5. If the Grantee has a financial audit performed during the time the Grantee is receiving funds from TDA, upon request, TDA shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, any schedules, and the final report or result of such audit.
6. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management, and the Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS), 2 CFR 215, 2 CFR 220, 2 CFR 225, and 2 CFR 230, if applicable.