

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Secretary Rollins,

We write to urge the prompt release of full funding for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026, as directed by law (7 U.S.C. § 6523). Organic agriculture sales have more than doubled in the last decade, but farmers still face challenges transitioning from conventional to organic practices. It is our understanding that FY25 OCCSP funds still have not been released, and accordingly, it is imperative that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) open applications for both FY25 and FY26 expeditiously to provide farmers in this growing industry the certainty and support they need.

According to the most recent USDA National Organic Survey,¹ New York State ranked second in the nation for organic agriculture production, totaling 331,438 acres.² Of New York's over 1,400 organic farms, 78% are classified as small.³ While we are encouraged by the rising demand for organic agriculture in New York, we remain concerned that the number of certified organic farms declined by nearly 24 percent from 2017-2022.⁴

The expense of obtaining the organic certification remains one of the largest barriers in organic agriculture. The OCCSP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and helps farmers cover up to 75 percent of the cost of organic certification for the program year. This reimbursement can be applied to application fees, inspection fees, fees related to international equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, inspector travel expenses, user fees, sales assessments, and postage.

It is clear that, despite the popularity of organic agriculture in New York State, organic producers need continued support to meet increasing consumer demand. As farmers across the country struggle with rising costs and lower margins, every dollar is critical. Farmers cannot wait years for reimbursements. We urge you to release both FY25 and FY26 funding without delay, so that New York's organic farmers can continue working to feed our state and the nation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we hope to work with you to support healthy communities and the viability of New York's organic industry.

¹ [profile-of-agriculture-in-nys.pdf](#)

² [cenorg22.pdf](#)

³ [cenorg22.pdf](#)

⁴ [profile-of-agriculture-in-nys.pdf](#)

Sincerely,


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Josh Riley
Member of Congress