

How to talk to your NRCS office about the Organic Transition Initiative (OTI) resources available for you

Who should I speak with?

Contact your [local NRCS office](#), or contact your state office for additional assistance.

You can also visit this [TOPP West Resources](#) page and find NRCS contacts for each of the western states under OTI Resources.

Information to gather before your conversation:

- Up-to-date records on Farmers.gov
- Previous three years of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
- How you have access and control over the land
- Proof of organic certification, or organic transition records
- Previous improvements and projects made to the property



Questions to ask:

Eligibility:

- I own/rent my land. What documents will you need for [completion of my EQIP application](#) by the deadline?
- I am eligible for the increased and advanced payment option for [Historically Underserved](#) farmers. How will this change my application process?
- My farm is certified/transitioning to organic. What additional information will you need for completing my conservation plan and application by the deadline?
- Does eligibility for assistance under [CPS-823](#) differ from traditional eligibility?

Assistance Available:

- What financial and technical assistance is available to my farm through CPS-823?
- Are there any state initiatives that I qualify for as an organic or transitioning-to-organic producer?
- Can I get financial assistance for conservation work I have already started or completed?
- Can NRCS help me develop and implement a comprehensive conservation plan that is tailored to my organic operation?

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<https://ofrf.org/news/topp-west-resources/>



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Questions to ask (cont'd):

Application Process/Logistics:

- 1) I'm interested in EQIP programs to address conservation issues/projects of interest for my farm. What do you need from me to get started on my application?
- 2) How soon can a conservationist visit my farm to set up a conservation plan ([AD 1026](#))? Is that the same as a [Comprehensive Conservation Plan](#)?
- 3) When is the deadline for the next [EQIP ranking period](#)?
- 4) What are the [state and national resource concerns](#) that are the highest priority? Will my project address them?

After an award:

- 1) Are there things that I will need to do after I get the financial assistance to monitor or evaluate the project?
- 2) What are the reporting requirements and when do they need to be submitted?
- 3) How will NRCS communicate updates, changes or new opportunities related to my project or future projects?
- 4) Can NRCS provide guidance on maintaining records that satisfy both organic certification and NRCS program requirements?

What if the Field Agent is unaware of CPS-823 or the conservation benefits of organic agriculture?

NRCS employees may not be familiar with the specifics of organic certification and management; patience and persistence will be crucial to getting access to the assistance you need and deserve.

See these [NRCS-sponsored webinars and training modules](#) for additional resources that you can share with your NRCS service providers to help educate them about organic transition support.

Contact the state office if you continue to experience a lack of understanding or support.



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