

5 Easy Steps for Organic Certification

Step 1: Create and Submit an Organic System Plan

The Organic System Plan describes how your operation's processes and practices adhere to the USDA Organic Regulations. Most likely, you're already keeping a lot of these records!

The QCS application includes everything you will need to create your OSP and apply for certification.

Step 2: Initial Review

Your application is reviewed for completeness and to confirm you have a plan in place to ensure the integrity of organic products.

Reviewers may reach out to you for supporting documentation. Prompt responses help keep certification on track .

Step 3: Inspection

Inspection is a crucial step in the organic certification process.

An inspector will conduct an on-site inspection of your operation to confirm that the processes on paper align with the practices in place.

Your inspector will review records, walk your operation, and conduct an exit interview to go over their findings.

It is important to note that the inspector is not the same person who will be making a certification decision. They pass on their inspection report to the final reviewer. You will also get a copy of the report.

Step 4: Final Review

After inspection, your application goes through final review.

The final reviewer reviews your OSP and the inspection report to come to a final certification decision.

At this stage, your final reviewer may request additional documents to clarify aspects of the OSP and/or the inspection report.

Step 5: Continuing Certification

Maintaining certification is on-going process, not a single event.

Communicate any changes to your OSP outside of annual review to your reviewer to confirm that the change aligns with the USDA Organic Regulations.

Annually, a certified operation will submit their OSP with any updates, undergo an on-site inspection, and pay annual fees.

