

United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



**Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)
West/Southwest Region**

Request for Proposal

Submission Deadline:

September 5, 2025 5pm PST

Send submissions and questions to:

jparr@ccof.org

1. Summary

CCOF holds a five-year cooperative agreement with the USDA National Organic Program to lead the Western Regional Center for Organic Transition (Center)- as part of the [USDA Transition to Organic Partnerships Program](#). CCOF is seeking subcontracts with organizations and institutions to provide technical assistance, community building, and workforce development for transitioning and existing organic farmers in seven states: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, and Hawaii.

2. Background

The USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) was launched in the fall of 2022 to provide technical assistance and support for transitioning and existing organic farmers, and to a limited extent, processor/handlers. TOPP is a collaborative national effort involving partners working together towards a common goal of transitioning conventional producers to organic production. The TOPP network covers six regions: the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Plains, Northwest, and West/Southwest. In each geographic area there is one “Regional Lead” responsible for program coordination and forming partnerships with organizations to serve transitioning and existing organic farmers. Find more information about the TOPP on [USDA’s website](#) and on the [TOPP website](#). TOPP is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), overseen by the National Organic Program.

Contract information

- CCOF will accept project proposals that span from Q4 2025-Q3 2026. All contract deliverables and invoices must be completed and submitted to CCOF by September 30, 2026.
- Allowable costs are determined by the [Code of Federal Regulations 2CFR200](#)
- The cooperative agreement is based on the submission of public facing deliverables to CCOF. All payments are based on reimbursements for deliverables completed. Organizations receiving funding under CCOF are vendors for management and audit purposes.

Eligibility Requirements

CCOF is accepting proposals from organizations and institutions (nonprofit & public) in these seven states: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas and Hawaii.

Goal Areas:

1) Community Building

Establish opportunities for organic-focused community building opportunities, which will include both face-to-face networking opportunities and online networking and resource hubs, where farmers can connect with and contact each other online, and locate resources such as trainings, templates for organic system plans, organic regulations, and tips for organic farming. Community

building activities can also address substantial barriers to organic certification within a community or state.

Sample Outcomes: Prospective organic farmers will participate in community building events both in person and virtual across the Western/Southwestern region. Events will be designed to attract and educate farmers who are interested in becoming certified organic producers.

Sample Deliverables: Recorded webinar of Organic 101 educational session for target group of farmers, field day for cotton and peanut farmers on how to go organic, conference for farmer-facing conference that includes Organic Transition session.

Priority Areas:

- Address high cost of inspection in Hawaii and/or other rural areas of the West/Southwest region.
- Build additional organic understanding in farming communities in Utah and Nevada.
- Support usage and understanding of Federal Organic Cost-Share program.
- Update or expand existing organic inspection training programs with proven efficacy and design.
 - Increase inspector understanding of legal compliance and personal safety, including anti-harassment legal requirements, reporting requirements, stress and burnout prevention.
 - Expand organic inspector customer service and interpersonal skills, including but not limited to communication best practices, de-escalation techniques, and client background awareness.
- Create a public facing needs assessment of the organic communities education and training needs once TOPP funds are expended.

2) Technical Assistance

Create educational resources and provide on-the-ground, local technical assistance to train prospective organic farmers through 1:1 organic technical assistance, webinars, courses, regional on-farm field days and workshops. These sessions will provide region-appropriate content and engagement including education and technical assistance on agronomy, organic certification, conservation planning, business skills development, organic supply chain management, strengthening organic enforcement, land tenure, organic regulations, marketing, and completing Organic System Plans and other relevant information. Technical assistance activities will be designed in coordination with each state's core partner.

Priority Areas:

- Marketing innovation and support for transitioning and organic livestock / meat producers.

- Develop and provide programs for transitioning and organic farmers on business skill development.
- Marketing for transitioning and certified organic producers – including wholesale marketing competencies.
- Land-tenure tools for organic production
- Crop specific cost of production/return on investment studies.
- Support small-scale, middle supply chain handlers (like food hubs) to increase organic competency and gain certification

Sample Outcome: Prospective organic farmers will receive technical assistance to support their transition to organic. Technical assistance will be provided by both state agencies (ex: cooperative extension, NRCS), regional non-profits, and farmer facing organizations. Technical assistance will support prospective farmers in their successful transition to certified organic production.

Sample Deliverables: Organic producer IPM/input guide for geographic region, flyer for on-farm training about organic transition, extension newsletter for farmer audience with technical information about organic growing, organic-focused wholesale market tour.

3) Data Collection and Reporting

All chosen TOPP collaborators will participate in data collection through the online reporting system Airtable. Acknowledgement of data management work may be included in general applications. CCOF welcomes proposals about data visualization about the work of the TOPP W/SW region including but not limited to reports, blogs, videos, and photo essays.

Sample Outcome: Gather and collate information about the activities and outcomes of the Center. Report on outcome.

Sample Deliverables: Final evaluation metrics, sample evaluation tool, detailed report of impact of first year of program, farmer stories from W/SW region.

4) Workforce Training and Development (Human Capital)

To expand organic markets and increase demand, the organic sector requires a workforce with knowledge of organic practices. Educational institutions chosen to participate will build organic focused workforce training and education and participate in future human capital planning for the organic sector. Funding will invest in partnerships that expand the agricultural supply chain workforce knowledge of organic practices and market development across the agriculture and food supply chain (organic farming and production, storage, handling, shipping, processing). Partners within the Center will integrate educational and workforce development programming with local market development and focus student learning opportunities on a range of activities including organic agronomy, marketing, product development, organic handling, organic

oversight, and organic technical consultants (such as Pest Control Advisors, Certified Crop Advisors, and Organic Inspectors, NRCS Technical Service Providers).

Priority Areas:

- Develop and provide NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP) train the trainer programs for organic-focused professionals.
- Develop and conduct virtual or in-person certificate level trainings for organic inspectors – sufficient to qualify an individual (beyond education and life experience requirements) for a job as an organic inspector- all scopes. Specific priority for inspector training and certification in Hawaii, Texas, New Mexico.
- National organic certificate course for Certified Crop Advisors

Outcome: Partners will build and expand educational programs across the region that will focus on state specific needs for workforce development to support the organic supply chain.

Sample deliverables: Certified Crop Adviser organic certificate course, organic inspector certificate course.

Proposal format

Please use the template below for the Project Narrative

If your proposal is selected, CCOF will provide additional budget, scope of work, and timeline documentation needed for contract completion.

Submission Requirements

All proposals must be submitted electronically.

Evaluation Criteria

CCOF with support from the National Organic Program will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- The proposal meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP.
- The proposal is presented in a clear, logical manner, is well organized and has the appropriate information as described in the RFP.
- The candidate has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake and be successful with this project.
- The candidate has familiarity with the food and agriculture sector, and preferably, understands organic agriculture.
- The candidate firm has an appropriate number of staff and the necessary expertise to be successful.
- The price is appropriate for the value being offered.

Reporting Requirements

Funded projects will provide quarterly reports and copies of deliverables that present the activities undertaken for each quarter along with invoices. Funded subcontractors will participate in evaluation and storytelling with tools provided by CCOF.

Contact Information

Please contact CCOF's Chief Program Officer, Jessy Beckett Parr with any questions regarding this RFP by email or phone at jparr@ccof.org

FY 2025 WESTERN/SOUTHWESTERN REGION TOPP PARTNER PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:
Principal Investigator (PI):
Total Funding Request:
FY of Funding Request (check all that apply): 2025 <input type="checkbox"/>, 2026 <input type="checkbox"/>

PI Institution:

PI Mailing Address:
PI Email Address:
Website for TOPP page to direct to:

TOPP PRIORITIES ADDRESSED (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)	
Community Building	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical Assistance and Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Collection and Reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce Training and Development (Human Capital)	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROPOSAL SUMMARY (200 words maximum):

NARRATIVE GUIDELINES:

The project narrative should be no more than 3 pages single spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with 1" page margins.

1. TOPP goal areas addressed

Describe the TOPP goal areas, as described in this RFP, that your project will address.

2. Specific activities

Briefly describe the activities that will be undertaken for each TOPP goal area

3. Specific project deliverables

Briefly describe the specific deliverables that will be produced by the project activities by TOPP goal area

4. Specific Outcomes

Describe how many individuals are impacted by the project.

5. Project Scope

Describe how this project builds on or supports any of your organization's ongoing projects or activities