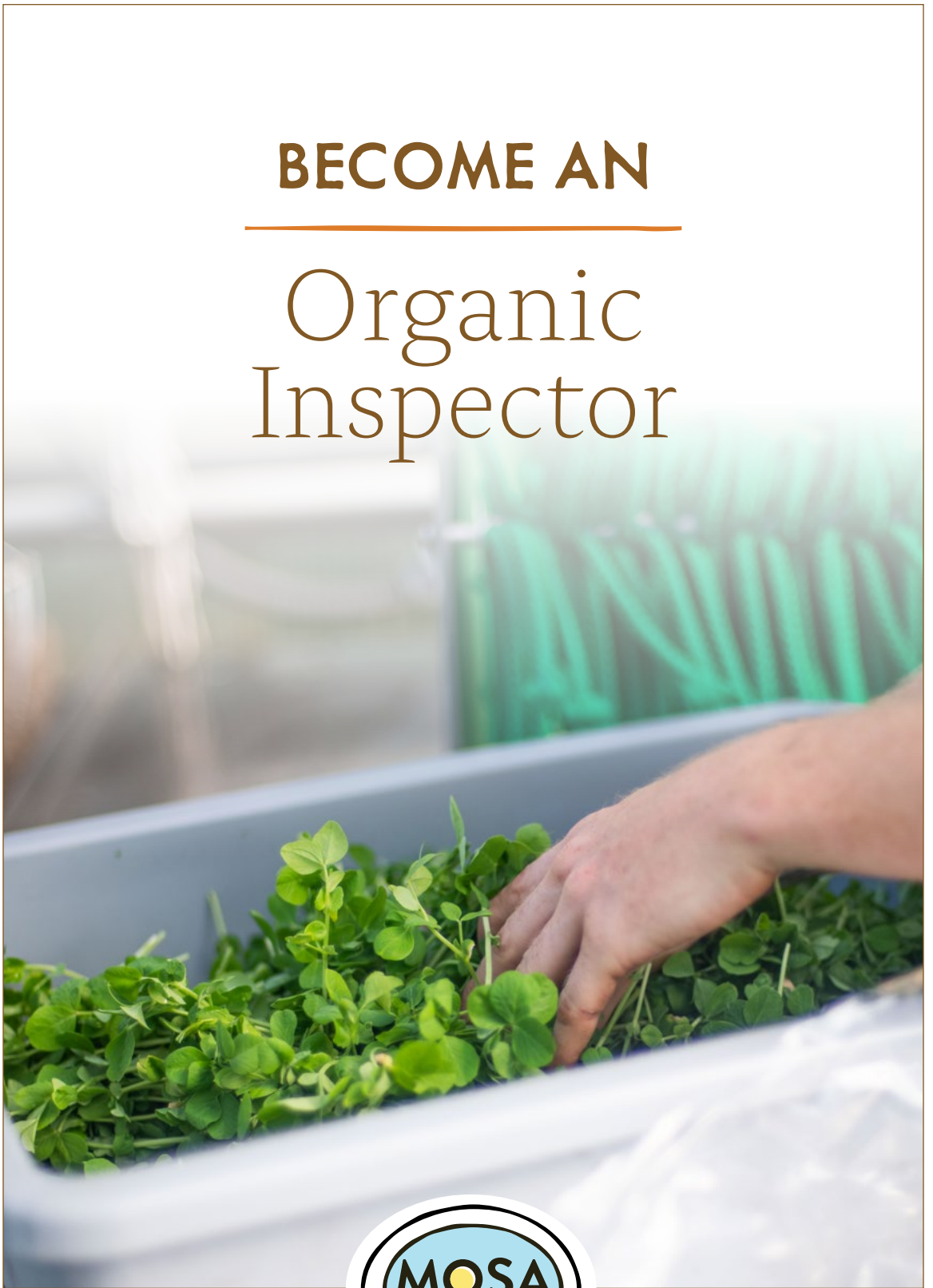


**BECOME AN**

---

# Organic Inspector



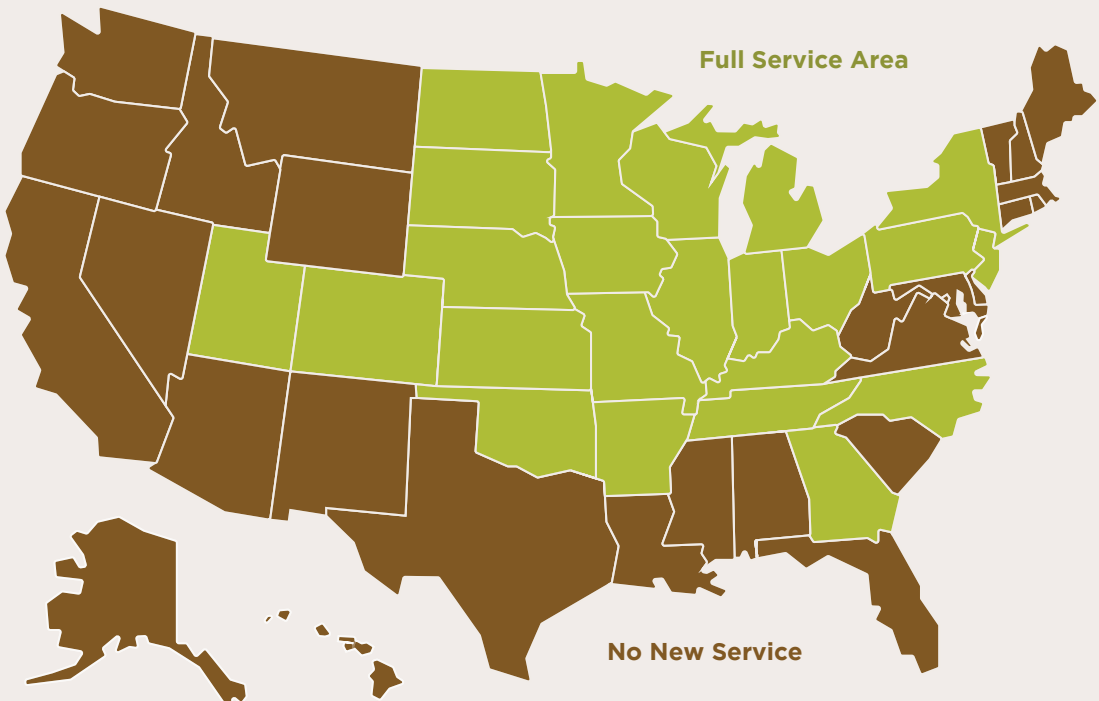
# ABOUT MOSA

---

MOSA Certified Organic is one of the largest organic certifiers in the United States, and the largest certifier of livestock and dairy. We currently certify nearly 2000 operations, including a wide diversity of farms and hundreds of organic processors, distributors, brokers, retailers and restaurants. MOSA was founded in 1999 and was among the first agencies to be accredited by the USDA in 2002 when the National Organic Standards went into effect. MOSA is a proven leader in the development, continuous improvement, and enforcement of these standards.

MOSA works with a great team of contractor inspectors throughout our service region to conduct our clients' annual organic inspections. To meet the growing need of our industry, MOSA is looking for trained contract inspectors in our Areas of Service.

## AREAS OF SERVICE



# WHY AN ORGANIC INSPECTION CAREER MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR YOU

Contract inspector work is a great opportunity for those that are looking for a flexible career working with organic farmers and organic processors. Contract inspectors determine their own workload and schedules, and balance their time between on-location inspections and in-office report writing.

Contract inspection work is ideal for those with farming, food safety, and other regulatory compliance experience. Specifically, Contract Organic Inspectors verify that the process of organic production and handling by a farm or business seeking organic certification meets the requirements of the USDA National Organic Standards.

This includes inspecting fields, livestock, buildings and equipment. Inspectors also note contamination and commingling risks, verify pest management efficacy, and audit sales and production records. An organic inspector can be a farm organic inspector or a processing (handling) organic inspector, or both. Inspectors do not make certification decisions—they write a report of their on-site observations, and submit documentation that allows others to make informed decisions.



## CONTRACT INSPECTOR REQUIREMENTS

To become an organic inspector, the National Organic Program requires that you have 2000 hours of work or life experience that is relevant to the operations you wish to inspect. In addition to 2000 hours of relevant experience, prospective inspectors with no training must complete a minimum of 50 hours of training before inspecting independently.

In the past, training has typically happened exclusively through the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). In recent years the organic industry has begun to develop new avenues for training. Training may now be a combination of IOIA in person training or webinars, online training through the USDA Organic Learning Center, or training offered directly through an accredited certification agency such as MOSA. MOSA is developing a new inspector training program in partnership with the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). MOSA also offers a field apprenticeship for prospective inspectors who have received some training in the organic regulations, but need field experience prior to inspecting independently.

Please contact MOSA directly for more information about apprenticeship opportunities.

## INSPECTOR TRAINING

The International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) offers in person training as well as online webinars. Any IOIA training may count towards the required 50 hours of training. There are three basic training programs available through IOIA:

### **Basic Crop Inspection**

### **Basic Livestock Inspection**

### **Basic Processing Inspection**

Each program is offered as a stand alone training, often as a four or five day online course. Full details about the requirements, courses, and fees are available at: <https://www.ioia.net/training-institute/>



## USDA ORGANIC LEARNING CENTER TRAINING

Free training is available through the USDA Organic Learning Center at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/training>. These training sessions provide a good foundation in what the National Organic Standards are, and how they are enforced. These training sessions can count towards your overall 50 hour requirement.

## APPRENTICESHIP REQUIREMENT

MOSA requires all new inspectors to complete an apprenticeship in field training prior to inspecting independently. This field training is typically arranged by MOSA with one of our experienced inspectors. The field experience comes at the end of training, after you have received sufficient training in the organic regulations through IOIA, USDA Organic Learning Center or another route. Once regulatory training has been completed, MOSA can assist you in completing your apprenticeship.

## STAFF INSPECTORS

MOSA does hire experienced inspectors as full time salaried employees as the need arises.

Visit us online at [www.mosaorganic.org/join-us/inspectors](http://www.mosaorganic.org/join-us/inspectors) to see our current open Inspector positions.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

## What skills does MOSA look for in an inspector?

**KNOWLEDGE** Organic inspectors must have a solid understanding of organic certification and inspection processes, and know their role and limitations within them. Inspectors must know how to apply the regulations to practical situations and be able to explain applicable standards and certification procedures to the operator. Inspectors must also be proficient and current in their understanding of the specific procedures, policies and forms of each certifier they work for.

**OBSERVATION** Inspectors must be able to understand the 'big picture' of an operating system and to observe the details which support, or contradict, the Organic System Plan.

**COMMUNICATION** The ability to conduct an Informational Interview. Asking open ended questions, and asking the same question a different way and paraphrasing.

**DOCUMENTATION** Writing that is clear, concise and easily understood by the operator and Certification Specialist. Provide facts (not opinion), reference supporting documentation, and cite the appropriate NOP regulations and explanation of issues of concern.

**LISTENING** The ability to make a conscious decision to listen to and understand the speaker. To remain neutral and non-judgmental. Be patient, and allow for pauses and short periods of silence.

**MATH** Be able to convert from one unit of measure to another, calculate yields, calculate annual feed requirements in livestock operations, use of formulas to verify in/out balances and mass-balance audits, and use percentages to validate recipes and production reports etc.

**ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT** Inspections must be conducted with the authorized operator representative, and move from one area of operations to another in an efficient manner.

**SAMPLING** Sampling methods must be done according to MOSA policy. An inspector must only take samples if they have been trained and are authorized by MOSA.

**EXPERIENCE** Inspectors must have the specific and advanced knowledge required to evaluate a specific scope and operation type.



## Does MOSA pay for my inspector training?

No, federal labor law prohibits MOSA from training you to complete work assigned per your contract with MOSA. When applying for contract work as an organic inspector with MOSA you must be fully trained, have completed apprenticeship(s), and have sufficient experience to conduct the scope and complexity of work assigned. MOSA will provide training on how to use our systems and interpretation of our policies. We can provide group and one on one support as rules change and NOP requirements are clarified.



## Can inspecting for MOSA be a full-time job?

Yes, contract inspecting can be a full-time job. The National Organic Standards require that annual inspections are conducted during the production season so inspectors wanting to work throughout the winter typically complete training to the Handling scope or complete unannounced inspections.

## If I am hired by MOSA, how many inspections will I be assigned to do?

MOSA requires you to complete a minimum of 20 annual inspections per year. During the interview process we will discuss what you want your workload to be and will assign annual and/or additional inspections based on your capacity and desired workload.

## Can I work for more than one certification agency?

Yes, as a contract inspector with MOSA we do not limit your ability to work with other agencies.

## How much travel is required for an inspector?

It is MOSA's goal to match our Inspectors with clients that are no more than 100 miles away from your home base so you spend less time on the road and to reduce costs for our clients. However, there are opportunities to travel further if you desire.

## What does a typical inspector make?

Inspectors negotiate their rate of pay with the certifying agency. Fees vary by inspector based on their expertise, experience and the scope being inspected.

## What counts as 2000 hours of relevant experience?

If you are wanting to inspect crop operations, you need some background and experience in crop production. This could be life experience having worked on a farm, a degree in a field related to agriculture, or potentially inspection experience in a different field. Similarly, for inspecting livestock or processing operations, experience with and familiarity with livestock or food production is required.

## Are the IOIA webinars sufficient training?

IOIA offers basic National Organic Standards webinars that are geared toward preparing individuals who intend to take further training to become organic inspectors. These webinars are an introduction into the National Organic Standards and are highly recommended. All courses include instruction on the certification process, relevant organic standards, inspection protocols, audit trail (record keeping) requirements, input materials, report writing, ethics, investigation skills, risk assessment, and effective communications. After successfully completing these courses you can begin your boots on the ground mentorship.

## What are the next steps after I have taken the IOIA course?

After successfully completing an Inspector training course it is important to gain practical experience conducting inspections. After completing IOIA training, MOSA recommends that independent inspectors complete additional field training to enhance their skills and knowledge. We are available to assist you in navigating this portion of your training.

## Does MOSA provide support on Organic Policy? How do I keep up on regulations and industry issues?

Yes! MOSA hosts an annual on-line meeting to keep you current on changes to our forms, processes, issues in the organic industry, and new regulations. We also host monthly online video conferences with all our inspectors, providing a forum for you to ask questions, share experiences, tips and tricks and learn from fellow contract inspectors. Keep in mind, the National Organic Standards require working inspectors to complete ten hours of training, if inspecting to one scope and an additional five hours of annual training for each additional scope. MOSA is committed to keeping you up to date and providing the support you need to complete your assignments. MOSA's Inspection Team is available Monday through Friday via phone or email. Please contact us if you have questions or are ready to get started.





Promote Organic Integrity.

---

Inspect with MOSA.



**MOSAORGANIC.ORG**

---

122 W. Jefferson Street  
P.O. Box 821  
Viroqua, WI 54665

mosa@mosaorganic.org  
PH 844-637-2526  
FAX 608-492-0470  
TEXT 608-424-4118