PROGRAM GUIDES

RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE PROGRAM

PERENNIAL BIOMASS AND WARM SEASON PASTURES

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

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Not Accepting Applications

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PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association

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View Program Online →

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funding is to support the planting of perennial biomass (e.g., switchgrass) & warm season pastures.

Increasing the frequency of perennial biomass crops in annual rotations and/or use of warm season grasses as part of pasture management results in more resilient agricultural landscapes with an increased ability to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce soil erosion and provide many other ecological benefits.

INTAKE DATES

INTAKE	INTAKE DATES	ELIGIBLE PROJECT START DATE (INVOICE DATE)	ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPLETION DATE	CLAIM DEADLINE	PREVIOUS INTAKE GUIDE
1	Intake Open: October 24, 2023 Intake Close: February 2, 2024, 5pm ET	Date indicated in approval letter*	A Land Use Agreement must be entered into by the date communicated in your project approval notification. Projects must be completed by December 15, 2024	Initial Deadline – will be communicated in your project approval notification Final Deadline – December 15 of each year Note that some projects may be assigned a longer payment structure.	View

*The eligible project **start date** is the date a written approval letter is issued by OSCIA for each successful application. Eligible costs can only be incurred, invoiced, and/or paid by the applicant on or after the **start date** specified on the approval letter. **Only one claim can be submitted per project per program year, and only one payment will be made per claim.**

COST SHARE SUMMARY

$500/acre for increasing plantings of perennial biomass crops / warm season pastures in annual crop rotations

$1,000/acre for converting marginal and high-risk annual cropland (e.g., riparian areas) to perennial biomass crops / perennial warm season pastures

PROGRAM DETAILS

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Farm businesses that file farm business taxes in Ontario as demonstrated by:

- A valid **farm business registration number (FBRN)** *For information on registering a farm business and/or a religious exemption, visit Overview (agricorp.com).*

OR

- A Religious Exemption Letter provided by the OMAFRA Appeal Tribunal (provide with application submission)

OR

- A Cultural Exemption Letter provided by the Indian Agricultural Program of Ontario to First Nations farmers, verifying the farm business operates in a First Nations community (provide with application submission)

OR

- An income exemption from the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program (i.e., Start-up farm businesses, Business structure change, Not a normal production year, Age/Illness/Death of a spouse) (provided with application submission)

Applicants must:

- Have a verified, 4th Edition Environmental Farm Plan;
- Be willing to enter into a signed Land Use Agreement with OSCIA, committing the farm business to maintaining the proposed practice on the acres being applied for, for a set timeline; and,
- Be in compliance with all requirements of the law and must remain in compliance for the duration of the project.

Applicants must be undertaking their project on eligible lands, including:

- Privately owned farmland, including all managed lands for agricultural production (e.g., cropland);

- Land rented for agricultural production from a third-party;
- Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or Territorial Crown Land, under lease for the purpose of agricultural practices; or,
- Indigenous lands being managed for the purpose of agricultural production.

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Eligible Activities and Costs

Funding is to support increasing the planting of perennial biomass crops or warm season pasture crops in annual crop rotations, including on marginal and high-risk annual crop lands.

Eligible activities can include:

- Costs for establishing perennial biomass crops/warm season pasture including seed, plants, site preparation, and fertilizer, as required to establish perennials, planting equipment use, and labour
- Brush encroachment mitigation and control of invasive species to improve warm season pasture health, including mowing or chemical treatment (as required)

  Equipment to support rotational grazing including permanent and temporary cross-fencing costs, and mobile/offsite watering systems (e.g., solar, wind) for supporting grazing on newly established/enhanced acres of warm season pasture

  - Permanent or temporary fencing to improve grazing strategies
  - Alternative watering systems (e.g., systems, components, labour to install)

Grasses cannot be grazed and/or harvested before July 15th each year to protect grassland bird species.

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Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Biomass crops/warm season pastures harvested or grazed before July 15th

- Costs for establishing annual cash crops
- Establishing a water source to support grazing (e.g., drilling wells, ponds, etc.)
- Conversion of existing natural grasslands or clearing of forested land into new crop land/pastureland
- Tree or shrub plantings (see Tree and Shrub Planting)
- Activities supported by any federal, provincial, or municipal funding programs outside of the funding being applied for
- Activities and expenditures as detailed in the section Other Ineligible Costs and Activities

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How Much Cost-Share Funding Is Available?

Funding is available under RALP at a per-acre rate for approved acres increase perennial biomas crops or warm season pastures.

- Rate 1: $500/acre for increasing planting of perennial biomass crops/warm season pastures in annual crop rotations
- Rate 2: $1,000/acre for converting marginal and high-risk annual cropland (e.g., riparian areas) to perennial biomass crops / perennial warm season pastures

An initial payment of fifty per cent (50%), up to a maximum of $30,000 of funding will be issued upon the applicant beginning their project and the signing of a Land Use Agreement between the applicant and OSCIA. The balance will be issued once the eligible, approved practice is fully implemented, verified and a complete claim is submitted.

Applicants may have up to two active applications across all project categories at any given time in the intake.

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Land Use Agreements

RALP aims to provide long-term carbon sequestration through the use of Land Use Agreements. Before the first funding payment can be issued, approved RALP applicants are required to sign a Land Use Agreement with OSCIA.

In the Agreement to support eligible practices in the Perennial Biomass and Warm Season Pastures project category, participants commit to implement and maintain the approved project for a minimum of five (5) years. The Agreement is not on title, but producers must notify OSCIA of land ownership or control changes. If the current farmer is not the landowner, a written lease agreement between the landowner and the applicant farm business indicating that the land is managed by the applicant, must be included with the application.

Note: OSCIA reserves the right to verify practice implementation including conducting inspections before the final payment is issued and throughout the duration of the Land Use Agreement. If the practice is not maintained as outlined in the approved application and signed Land Use Agreement, applicants will be required to repay all funding received for the approved project.

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What Do I Need to Apply?

Applications are evaluated based only on the information submitted and will not be considered if they do not meet the eligibility criteria or if they are incomplete.

Be sure to carefully review the Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program guide in entirety. Before you can apply, you will need to visit osciaportal.org and create a user account. Once you have created a user account, if the intake is open, you will be able to enrol and submit an application.

You must include all of the information listed under Documentation Required With the Application with your application submission. You will be required to provide a detailed work plan on your application form that clearly outlines your commitment to implementing the proposed, eligible practice. You will also be required to enter into a Land Use Agreement upon approval of your application. If the required documentation is not received with the submission, the application may be considered incomplete and denied funding.

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Documentation Required with the Application

- Certificate of completion for a 4th Edition Environmental Farm Plan

  Detailed site map(s) based on a satellite image (e.g., using GoogleMaps, AgMaps) of the project site. The site map(s) must show the address or GPS coordinates and total area (acres) of the proposed perennial biomass/warm season pasture planting. For an example of a site map, click here.

  > **Note:** *Hand-drawn sketches will not be accepted* – If you need help accessing a satellite image of your project location, contact your local OSCIA Client Services Staff for free assistance. Click here for contact information.

  Letter of support from a qualified third-party (e.g., a Crop Rotation Plan from a CCA or P.Ag., or a pasture management plan from a grazing specialist), using the fillable PDF template available here. The letter of support must include:

  - Project location (address/GPS coordinates) and total area (acres)
  - Current land use/condition of the project location
  - Proposed activity/activities (e.g., tillage, over-seeding/frost seeding, biomass crop/warm season pasture species to be planted, planned crop rotation, harvesting methods or pasturing etc.)
  - An estimated project timeline
  - Name, signature, designation/organization and contact information of the qualified third-party

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How Do I Submit My Application?

Applications are only accepted during the application intakes dates noted above.

The Enrolment and Application Form and all required documentation can be submitted electronically through the OSCIA Portal:
If the intake is not currently accepting applications, you may still visit osciaportal.org to create a user account and be ready for upcoming opportunities.

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Limits of the Cost-Share Funding

- The eligible **start date** for your project is the date specified on the approval letter issued by OSCIA for each successful application. Projects cannot be started before that date.
- OSCIA issues an initial payment after the applicant has committed to maintaining the practice for the required period of time, as outlined in a signed Land Use Agreement and complete claim package. Final payments are issued after the approved practice has been fully implemented on the acres applied for, and all required final claim documentation has been received by OSCIA. The project must be paid for in full by the applicant prior to funding being issued.
- Applicants are responsible for securing all necessary approvals and permits for the proposed project before starting and complying with all applicable municipal bylaws and provincial or federal regulations. OSCIA may require copies of permits obtained for some projects before issuing payments.
- OSCIA reserves the right to require additional documentation and ultimately accept or reject a claim for funding consideration.
- Stacking of Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program (RALP) funding from one or more businesses towards the same project is not permitted.
- RALP funding cannot be stacked with any other federal, provincial, or municipal sources of funding.
- Activities funded under RALP will not be entitled to carbon credits/greenhouse gas (GHG) offsets for the duration of the land use agreement, after which, applicants may be eligible for Federal and Provincial GHG offset systems, as applicable.
- All goods and services must be purchased from an entity that is at arm's length from the farm business. An entity is considered arm's length if they are not related, not affiliated persons or otherwise controlled by another member or members. Parent/child and siblings, through blood or marriage, or businesses owned by the same individual(s) are not considered arm's length. Refer to Section 251 of the Income Tax Act (Canada) for the additional detail on determining arm's length relationships.

- Projects that have received funding are routinely inspected. The decision to inspect may be based on project type, amount of funding, or any other criteria selected by OSCIA. Projects may also be inspected randomly. Inspections may be carried out before the final claim is paid or may also be carried out to confirm the project complies with the signed Land Use Agreement through out the term of the agreement. Biosecurity protocols are followed by all representatives of OSCIA.

- Information presented is the best available at the current time. In the event of a conflict between anything set out in this program guide and/or any other program material and the Minister's Order, the Minister's Order will prevail. Errors and Omissions excepted. Check with OSCIA for applicable updates. Material is subject to change without notice as the cost-share program evolves.

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Other Ineligible Costs and Activities

- Projects that have the sole purpose of coming into or maintaining compliance with Requirements of the Law that pertain to current business operations.

- Normal operating costs associated with conducting or expanding a business' current operations, including annual service fees of any type.

- Any cost that is eligible for a rebate, credit, or refund (e.g., a refundable portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax).

- Gifts and incentives.

- Any cost purchased from a supplier who is not at arm's length from the applicant (i.e., businesses owned the same individual(s), or by siblings or parents, through blood or marriage).

- Applicant's costs of travel, hospitality, meals, and/or accommodations.

- Permits and approvals.

- Purchase, lease, construction or sale of land, buildings or facilities, and associated taxes or fees (e.g., land transfer tax).

- Extended warranties, taxes, legal fees, financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees.

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How Do I Submit a Claim?

If an application is approved for an allocation, written confirmation will be provided by OSCIA by email. This approval letter will include:

- Confirmation of eligible invoice dates and project completion and claim submission deadlines.
- A Land Use Agreement, which must be entered into by the applicant before the initial payment can be issued.
- Information required with the claim submission.
- Links to the necessary documents (e.g., Claim Form, Electronic Funds Transfer Form, Claim Questionnaire, etc.).
- Information on how to submit the claim.

The applicant ***must enter into a signed Land Use Agreement*** with OSCIA, committing the approved farm business to maintaining the eligible practice for a set period of time and the signed Agreement must be included with the initial claim submission.

The project must be ***complete, operational, and fully paid for before a final claim is submitted***. Every claim for the Perennial Biomass and Warm Season Pasture category must be supported by at least one of the following:

- Five to six photos of the project site(s) taken after the project is complete with the date(s) the photos were taken, a geo-referenced point (i.e., identifiable landmark) and GPS coordinates.
- Written confirmation from the technical specialist, consultant or Conservation Authority that confirms the perennial biomass or warm season pasture and its outcomes.

Note: OSCIA reserves the right to verify project implementation including conducting a site inspection before the final payment is issued and throughout the duration of the land use agreement. If the project is not maintained as outlined in the approved application and signed Land Use Agreement, applicants will be required to repay all funding received for the approved project.

Payments are made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) in the name of the legal business. All funding is considered income to the business for tax purposes. OSCIA will issue a tax form (AGR-1) and report the amount paid to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA); this is why an applicant's Social

Insurance Number (SIN) is collected if the applicant does not have a CRA Business Number. Only one claim can be submitted per project per program year, and only one payment will be made per claim.

If you have any questions about program requirements, project timelines or claim submission dates, contact OSCIA at:
s-cap@ontariosoilcrop.org.

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