PROGRAM GUIDES

CORE BMPS

COVER CROPPING

On-Farm Climate Action Fund

Generated on November 19, 2026

Not Accepting Applications

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PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association

T: 519-826-4214 **E:** oscia@ontariosoilcrop.org

View Program Online →

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

For farmers who want to undertake a **new practice** *A new practice is a practice that has not been previously implemented by the applicant on the acres included in the application. For example, if you have never used cover crops on a field and wish to plant cover crops for the first time.* of cover cropping or interseeding cover crops and leave them **undisturbed over the winter** (i.e., the cover crop cannot be chemically or physically terminated in the fall or winter). **A new practice** is a practice that has not been previously implemented by the applicant and can include planting cover crops to be left over-wintering for the first time (including where cover crops were previously implemented but terminated or harvested in the fall) when new to the acres being applied for, OR where implementing a cover crop is new at a certain point in the rotation (e.g. the acres tied to the project may have been cover cropped after wheat, but not cover cropped after corn).

If a cover crop being applied for is to be harvested or grazed, a minimum of 6 inches of growth must be left undisturbed over winter (November to March). All other cover crops must remain undisturbed (not terminated or incorporated) over the winter. **Approved projects must result in a planted cover crop in the year awarded funding.**

INTAKE DATES

INTAKE	INTAKE DATES	ELIGIBLE PROJECT START DATE (INVOICE DATE)	ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPLETION DATE	CLAIM DEADLINE	PREVIOUS INTAKE GUIDE
1	Intake Opened: February 24, 2026, 9AM ET Intake Closed: February 24, 2026, 10:17 AM ET	Eligible invoice date: February 1, 2026; Eligible project implementation start date: April 1, 2026	December 15, 2026	December 15, 2026	

Eligible project costs must be incurred, invoiced, and paid for by the approved farm business within the eligible project start and completion dates for the application intake a project is approved in. Costs incurred, invoiced and/or paid for outside of these dates or by entities other than the approved farm business **will not be eligible for cost-share**. For costs to be supported, the practice must be implemented before a claim can be submitted.

*OFCAF will support multi-year project implementation. Please refer to information in the Eligible Activities and Costs section below.

Approved applicants must also participate in a **Knowledge Sharing Event (KSE)** *KSEs support learning and adoption of BMPs specific to addressing climate change challenges in Ontario. A KSE is both a learning and networking opportunity for farmers. For more information about KSEs, see the section below on Required Participation in Knowledge Sharing Events* before their project can be considered complete.

COST SHARE SUMMARY

65% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project

75% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project for applicants new to OFCAF

PROGRAM DETAILS

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Eligible farm businesses must be actively farming or own actively farmed land 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 (include with application submission)

OR

- A Cultural Exemption Letter provided by the First Nations Agriculture & Finance Ontario to First Nations farmers, verifying the farm business operates in a First Nations community

(include with application submission)

OR

- 25 acres of land or more, assessed as ‘Farm’, as indicated by the most current Municipal Property Assessment Notice or Municipal Tax Bill in the name of the farm business (include with application submission)

OR

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

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Eligible Activities and Costs

- Qualified, third-party consultant (e.g., CCA, P.Ag.) fees to develop a cover crop plan. ***A copy of the completed plan must meet the minimum requirements and be included with the claim submission.*** Applications for funding to develop a cover crop plan do not require a letter of support with their application.

  Costs for implementing cover cropping when **new to the acres being applied for and/or new to the point in the rotation,** as recommended in a letter of support from a qualified professional third-party (professional agrologist, agronomist, or Certified Crop Advisor).

  A new cover cropping practice can include:

  - Planting cover crops to be left over-winter either for the first time or
  - Planting cover crops to be left over-winter where they have previously been terminated, or grazed or harvested to less than 6 inches, in the fall

- Interseeding cover crops and leaving them over-winter for the first time
- Cover cropping after a point in the rotation (e.g., after corn) that was previously not subject to a cover crop

Approved projects must result in a cover crop planted in the year awarded funding.

Eligible costs (must be purchased from a supplier who is at arm's length (e.g., unrelated) to the farm business) for the 2026 intake may include:

- Costs related to services provided by professional agrologists, agronomists, or Certified Crop Advisors
- Seed costs, including seed cleaning as required

  Costs of planting, which may include:

  - Custom planting costs
  - Rental of equipment for planting
  - Purchase of equipment for planting, including broadcast and air seeders, no-till seeders, components for autonomous seeding

    Drones used to plant cover crops

    - Additional eligible costs include drone batteries, if required for broadcasting cover crops, base station, if required to maintain proper signal, and spreader attachments used for seed broadcasting.
- Cover crop planting equipment is eligible for 50% cost-share funding. (Maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project.)

Multi-year projects under OFCAF:

An application can propose multi-year implementation of a new cover cropping practice for up to two years. Program years for cover cropping are:

- 2026: April 1, 2026 to December 15, 2026, for **single-year projects** *Costs can be incurred beginning February 1, 2026

    - 2026: April 1, 2026 to December 15, 2026, **for the first year of multi-year projects** *Costs can be incurred beginning February 1, 2026
    - 2027: April 1, 2027 to December 15, 2027, **for the second year of multi-year projects**

- To be eligible for multi-year support, the proposed practice must be **new** to the acres or **new** to the rotation point in the first year, and it must be continued in subsequent years of the program
- The new practice may follow the rotation point across multiple fields, i.e. the practice can be implemented on different acres each year, as long as it remains new following corn in each year of the project
- When completing an application that proposes multi-year implementation, project costs can be proposed in each program year that the new practice will be undertaken
- If the application is approved, the practice must be implemented, and a claim submitted in each program year that project costs were proposed, and a funding allocation approved
- Multi-year projects are limited to the maximum cost-share payment amount of $30,000 noted in the below section, How Much Cost-Share Funding is Available?

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Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Any cost not set out as an Eligible Activity and Cost and not specifically required for the execution of a cover cropping **project** *If you are uncertain about the eligibility of a project or cost, contact OSCIA before applying at OFCAF@ontariosoilcrop.org.*
- Costs where the proposed practice is not a new practice (i.e., the proposed practice has been previously used by the applicant on the acres or after the point in the rotation included in the application)
- Crops that can be harvested in the next growing season intended for market (e.g. winter cereals)
- Costs for triticale as a single species, alfalfa and perennial forages, wheat, canola, or any invasive species

- Costs where the cover crop will not be left undisturbed over winter
- Costs where the cover crop will be harvested or grazed, leaving **less** than 6 inches of growth over winter (November to March)
- Costs where the cover crop will be harvested or grazed, leaving more than 6 inches of growth over winter (November to March) are eligible.
- Consulting services not related to the project or not related to a cover crop plan, or a cover crop plan not prepared by a qualified professional (professional agrologist, agronomist, or Certified Crop Advisor)
- Costs related to mechanical or chemical termination of the cover crop (e.g., roller crimpers)
- Fertilizer, organic amendments, tillage, and crop protection costs
- Costs related to rejuvenation of existing forages, pastures, or hay land
- GPS components related solely to a guidance system (e.g., autosteer systems)
- Costs for materials or products produced by the applicant's farm business (e.g., seed)

Other Ineligible Costs and Activities

- Invoices and/or proof of payment not issued in the applicant's name
- Extended warranties, taxes, legal fees, financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees
- In-kind contributions of labour and farm equipment
- Materials or services purchased outside the eligible invoice dates
- Typical farm equipment (e.g., tires, tractors, skid steers, combines, livestock trailers, strip tillers, commodity carts, etc.) and related accessories or attachments unless specified as an Eligible Activity and Cost
- 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)
- Normal operating costs associated with conducting or expanding a business's current operations
- Any cost that is eligible for a rebate, credit, or refund (e.g., a refundable portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax)

- Gifts and incentives
- Equipment or equipment customizations that do not support an increase in soil carbon or a decrease in nitrogen loss
- Costs related to activities that directly influence or lobby any level of government
- Costs of basic research, ongoing activities, normal commercial expansion costs, and annual services fees of any type
- Lease of land, buildings, and facilities, or new building construction
- Costs of training and skills development that fulfill any academic requirements towards completion of a professional certificate, diploma, or degree program
- Costs of sponsorship for conferences and learning events or initiatives
- Costs of travel, hospitality, meals, and/or accommodations
- Permits and approvals
- Purchase or sale of land, buildings or facilities, and associated taxes or fees (e.g., land transfer tax)
- Tile drainage systems, crop storage facilities (e.g., grain bins, seed storage), TMR mixers, feed pushers and automated feeding systems
- Mentoring or coaching services that do not support the development of a written plan
- Multi-use items (e.g., items that can reach beyond the scope of the project such as computers, printers, hand or power tools and attachments, etc.)

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How Much Cost-Share Funding Is Available?

Cost-share funding is available at 65% of approved, eligible costs for farm businesses that have previously received OFCAF cost-share funding. Cost-share funding is available at 75% of approved, eligible costs for applicants new to OFCAF.

The maximum cost-share funding a farm business can receive under the OFCAF program, from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2028, inclusive of all approved applications under all project categories is $100,000*.

Cover Cropping has a maximum cost-share amount per project of:

65% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project

75% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project for applicants new to OFCAF

Cover crop planting equipment is eligible for 50% cost-share funding. (Maximum cost-share payment of $30,000 per project.)

To be eligible to receive a cost-share funding allocation, the practice must be implemented (cover crop is seeded) on new acres or at a new point in the rotation before the Project Completion Date and Claim Deadline.

* This includes any funding under the On-Farm Climate Action Fund, delivered by any organization across Canada (e.g., in Ontario, funding delivered by OSCIA and by Ecocert)

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Required Participation in Knowledge Sharing Events

OFCAF provides a high level of cost-share funding to support implementation of targeted BMPs with a goal of encouraging successful, long-term adoption. Access to knowledge and resources are key components to ensure success. **Applicants must participate in an OSCIA-recognized Knowledge Sharing Event (KSE) within the eligible Project Start and Completion dates for their approved OFCAF application, and before submitting a claim for cost-share. Successful applicants must participate in a minimum of one (1) KSE for each approved project that aligns with the project's category.**

KSEs support learning and adoption of BMPs specific to addressing climate change challenges in Ontario (e.g., carbon sequestration and reducing GHG emissions). A KSE is both a learning and networking opportunity, where farmers can benefit from:

- Seeing the latest applied research
- Hearing first-hand experiences from other farmers and industry experts

- Gaining access to information networks and resources

  A KSE can be a new or existing demonstration event, webinar, workshop, or conference, and may be delivered by OSCIA or by other agricultural organizations or service providers. Costs associated with attending a KSE (e.g., registration, mileage, travel, etc.) are not eligible for cost-share.

  A listing of approved KSEs can be found at https://ontariosoilcrop.org/knowledge-sharing-event-kse/?calendar=kse

  Contact OSCIA at OFCAF@ontariosoilcrop.org to inquire if an event that is not listed meets the OFCAF KSE requirements.

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Documentation Required with the Application

- An FBRN in the name of the farm business, or documentation supporting an exemption, or current Municipal Property Assessment Notice or Municipal Tax Bill

- **Digital site map(s)** based on a satellite image (e.g., using Google Maps or AgMaps) of all field(s) included in the application. The site map(s) must show the precise location(s) (address/GPS coordinates) and total area (acres) of the project.

  For multi-year projects, the site location of acres **for each year of the project** must be included.

  For an example of a site sketch, click here.

  A site map is not required if applying only for a cover crop plan.

  Hand drawn sketches will not be accepted – if you need help using GoogleMaps or AgMaps, please contact your local OSCIA Field Staff for free assistance. Click here for contact information.

- A Letter of Support that meets the minimum requirements from a qualified professional third-party (professional agronomist, agrologist, or Certified Crop Advisor) supporting the on-farm implementation of the cover cropping practice.

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How Do I Submit My Application?

Applications are only accepted during application intakes. Be sure to review the program guide in entirety – only eligible and complete applications will be considered.

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, enrol your farm business, and be ready for upcoming opportunities.

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Limits of the Cost-Share Funding

- If the applicant initiates the project before receiving final approval from OSCIA, they do so at the risk of forfeiting the cost-share if all terms and conditions are not satisfied.
- OSCIA issues payments after projects have been completed and all required claim documentation is received. The project must be paid for in full by the applicant and the approved practice(s) must be implemented on new acres prior to cost-share being issued.
- All invoices for the approved project must comply with the eligible invoice dates outlined in a letter of approval issued by OSCIA for the proposed project. OSCIA cannot issue cost-share payments for incomplete or partially complete projects.
- 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 cost-share payments.
- OSCIA reserves the right to require additional documentation and ultimately accept or reject submitted project invoices and proof of payment for cost-share consideration.

- Stacking of OFCAF cost-share funding from one or more farm business and/or one or more sources of OFCAF funding, towards the same project is not permitted.

- Stacking of OFCAF cost-share funding with other programs outside of OFCAF up to 100% of the project cost, is permitted if the other program(s) allow stacking and at least 15% of the project costs come from non-government sources. All funding for a project from off-farm sources, excluding financing, must be listed on the claim form for an approved project.

- A cost-share allocation is based on the eligible project costs outlined on the approved Application Form. Accurate estimates to the best of the applicant's ability must be reflected in the total project cost submitted on the Application Form and quotes are recommended to inform proposed project costs. If final project costs exceed the original estimate or the scope of the project changes, there is no obligation by OSCIA to extend cost-share beyond the original allocation and/or project scope.

- 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.

- Any GHG emission reductions arising from an approved project between February 15, 2022, and March 31, 2028, shall not be used by the farmer to apply for any existing or future federal or provincial offset credit programs.

- Information presented is the best available at the time of publishing. Check with OSCIA for applicable updates. Material is subject to change without notice as the cost-share program evolves.

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How Do I Submit a Claim?

If an application is approved for a cost-share allocation, written confirmation will be provided from OSCIA by email (or by post, if no email address is provided). This approval letter will confirm:

- Any costs from the application that were deemed ineligible

- Eligible invoice dates, project completion and claim submission deadlines
- What is needed with the claim submission
- Instructions on how to verify participation in an eligible KSE
- Information on how to submit your claim using the OSCIA online Portal

Each project must be complete, fully paid for, the practice implemented on new acres, and an eligible KSE completed before a claim is submitted.

As part of an eligible project, every claimed cost must be supported by an invoice in the name of the applicant farm business. All costs being claimed must be paid for by the applicant farm business. **Proof of payment must verify who paid, who received payment, the amount of payment, and the date of payment.** Proof of payment may be any one of the following:

- Copy of front and back of a cancelled cheque
- Electronic image of a processed cheque
- E-Transfer confirmation, which includes the word ‘Deposited’ or ‘Autodeposited’
- Bill Payment confirmation from a banking institution
- Statement from banking institution with the applicant business name indicating to whom the processed cheque was written, or electronic payment made, and for what amount
- Credit card or debit card receipt clearly identifying the amount and to whom the payment was made. Credit card or debit card numbers and other information, including costs that are unrelated to the project, should be blacked out

Cash payments for project costs are strongly discouraged, as they may not meet requirements for proof of payment. If proof of payment is not provided, OSCIA cannot support the cost. OSCIA may request any additional information from the applicant that OSCIA deems necessary (e.g., copies of any audit reports, plans or permits obtained by the applicant in conducting the project) to support their claim.

Cost-share payments are made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) in the name of the legal farm business. All cost-share funding is considered taxable income to the farm business. 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.

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