

National Organic Standards Board
Compliance, Accreditation & Certification Subcommittee Discussion Document
Supporting the Work of the NOSB
January 12, 2021

Background

In order to advance dialogue on the qualifications and training of organic inspection and reviewers, the National Organic Program (NOP) issued a July 31, 2020 [Memorandum to the National Organic Standards Board regarding Human Capital Strategy for Organic Inspectors and Reviewers](#). Subsequently, the NOSB posted a [Fall 2020 Discussion Document on Human Capital Strategy for Organic Inspectors and Reviewers](#) to invite public comments and suggestions on this topic.

Discussion

The board received valuable feedback on the areas addressed in the NOP's memo, particularly: Strategic Workforce Planning; Talent Management: Pipeline Development; Talent Management: Recruitment and Matching; Performance Management and Evaluation; and Professional Support and Educational Infrastructure.

In response to the questions posed by the NOP Memo under "Talent Management: Pipeline Development", the board received the following remark by a public commenter:

In addition to those fields noted in the memo, other expertise such as those in chemistry, ecology, biological sciences, plant pathology, and biological engineering would be particularly helpful, especially when considering many of the topics discussed and debated by the NOSB. We have long wondered what it would look like if each NOSB member had a research assistant (a co-op position for a graduate student, for example) to help conduct and provide literature reviews, write drafts, and otherwise support the work of NOSB members. What better way to expose young people to the organic community than through service to its leadership board!?

The level of work involved for NOSB members has been cited by some as a discouragement towards serving on the board. The Board has discussed previously if there might be ways to obtain outside assistance in its work without compromising the integrity of the process or the independent nature of the production and deliberation of its proposals. The Board appreciates that this is a sensitive topic.

Related References

- [The Policy and Procedures Manual](#) allows for the Advisory Committee Specialist to "Ensur[e] NOSB members have all necessary materials and information to provide informed, structured and timely recommendations to the NOP".
- The [NOSB Charter](#) provides that: "The National Organic Program shall provide administrative support to the NOSB through the work of an Advisory Committee Specialist, who is a staff member within the NOP. The NOP may also provide technical support to the NOSB based on need and available resources."
- [§6518. National Organic Standards Board \(j\) Other terms and conditions](#) states: "The Secretary shall authorize the Board to hire a staff director and shall detail staff of the Department of Agriculture or allow for the hiring of staff and may, subject to necessary appropriations, pay necessary expenses incurred by such Board in carrying out the provisions of this chapter, as determined appropriate by the Secretary."

Questions for Stakeholders

1. Please provide any general comments on the remark above.
2. Is the organic community comfortable with the Board getting support to “to help conduct and provide literature reviews, write drafts, and otherwise support the work of NOSB members”?
3. If so, what areas are appropriate for the Board to get support?
4. For which areas should the Board not use outside support?

Vote in Subcommittee

Motion to accept the Supporting the Work of the NOSB discussion document

Motion by: Emily Oakley

Seconded by: Nate Powell-Palm

Yes: 5 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0 Recuse: 0

Approved by Nate Powell-Palm, Subcommittee Chair, to transmit to NOSB January 12, 2021.