



MIDWEST TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

A coalition of partners providing support for transitioning and existing organic producers

TOPP Internship Offers Insight into Organic Workforce

The Organic Ecological Food and Farms Association (OEFFA) was fortunate to have crossed paths with Lindsey Marshall for an internship through the Organic Farmers Association's Organic Career Network. The internship was offered to support the Ohio Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). Lindsey's enthusiasm for organic agriculture, coupled with a B.S. in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems from US Davis, was ultimately why she was chosen for this role.

During her time with OEFFA, Lindsey was introduced to different facets of working for a non-profit organic organization. She learned more about the National Organic Program and the Organic Standards, navigated and utilized the Organic Integrity Database, worked with the marketing team to promote TOPP, interfaced with TOPP mentors and mentees, supported staff with quarterly TOPP reporting, and participated in the Midwest TOPP "Meeting of the Minds" annual partner meeting.

The knowledge Lindsey gained from interviewing some of OEFFA's organic mentors and mentees inspired an article about TOPP mentorship for [OEFFA's quarterly newsletter](#). The article detailed one farmer's journey from doctor to farmer, and how integral the TOPP program has been for his success—not only beginning to farm a large acreage of row crops, but to do that while transitioning the farm to certified organic.

Being most familiar with agriculture in the West, and then working with Midwest producers for this project, broadened Lindsey's understanding of how agriculture differs across the country. She shared that the internship offered valuable networking opportunities and helped her gain deeper knowledge of the organic standards and the process of becoming certified, which she will take with her on her professional journey.

"I was so happy that OEFFA and the TOPP Program were able to teach me so much, I am so excited to continue my career in the organics field," shared Lindsey. This internship experience strengthens the organic workforce and increases awareness about the opportunities and benefits of organic movement.

About the Transition to Organic Partnership Program

The [USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program](#) (TOPP) is investing up to \$100 million over five



years in cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations who are partnering with others to provide technical assistance and wrap-around support for transitioning and existing organic farmers. USDA is building partnership networks in six regions across the United States with trusted organizations serving direct farmer training, education, and outreach activities.

Midwest Regional Lead Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) partners with organizations experienced in the organic industry to provide mentoring services, technical assistance, community building, and organic workforce development for transitioning and existing organic farmers.

For more information on upcoming TOPP events, mentorship opportunities, and farmer resources in your region, visit [OrganicTransition.org](https://www.organictransition.org). Visit USDA's [TOPP Success Stories](https://www.usda.gov/topp-success-stories) page to read about the exciting work being done in communities throughout the United States.

1. Photo: 2024 Meeting of the Minds: Left to right: Kris Olson, Johnnie Speicher, Lindsey Marshall, Sasha Sigetic, August Taylor
2. Newsletter article: TOPP Mentee, Nanda <https://news.oeffa.org/topp-spotlight-nanda>