THE COMMUNICATOR

ORGANIC CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL | DECEMBER 2026



Organic Eye recognizes OCIA as Certifier Upholding the Highest Ethical Standards

Take Back the Organic Farming Movement

Switch to Certifiers That Protect Family Farms and Share Our Values

Certifiers Upholding the Highest Ethical Standards

Baystate Organic Certifiers
Global Organic Alliance, Inc. (GOA)
MOFGA Certification Services
NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC
OEFFA Certification
OneCert, Inc.
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA)
Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC
Yolo County Organic

Ethically-Challenged Certifiers

Partnering with corporate lobbyists and the USDA: hydroponics, livestock factories, imports, conflicts of interest, etc.

Americert International
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)*
Clemson University
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Control Union Certifications*
EcoCert*
Georgia Crop Improvement Association
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Indiana Certified Organic — EcoCert (ICO)*
Midwest Organic Services Association, Inc. (MOSA)
Nature's International Certification Services — EcoCert*
OnMark Certification Services
Oregon Department of Agriculture
Oregon Tilth Certified Organic*
Organic Certifiers, Inc*
Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)*
Pro-Cert Organic Systems, Ltd.*
Quality Assurance International (QAI)*
Quality Certification Services*
Texas Department of Agriculture
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Washington State Department of Agriculture*
Where Food Comes from Organic*

Unranked

Agricultural Services Certified Organic
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Marin Organic Certified Agriculture
Maryland Department of Agriculture
Minnesota Crop Improvement Association*
Montana Department of Agriculture
Monterey County Certified Organics
Natural Food Certifiers*
Perry Johnson Registrar Food Safety, Inc.
Primus Auditing Operations*
SCS Global Services, Inc.*

* Organic OTA Certifier-Member

OrganicEye

This guide will be continually updated as more information becomes available at **OrganicEye.org**.
If you are a farmer or business certified by one of the unranked organizations,
please encourage them to contact **OrganicEye** to transparently share their policies.



President's Message

Greetings everyone! As the year comes to a close, I hope everyone had a safe and bountiful harvest. Your OCIA board and staff have been working diligently making organic certification cost effective and reliable for all.

I'd first like to take a moment thanking Jack Geiger for his past service to OCIA. Jack resigned from the board this October to pursue a career in local politics. He had served OCIA in various capacities since 2010. His knowledge and insight into organic agriculture will be missed. We wish Jack all the best with his future endeavors. Chris Barnett a farmer from Kansas Chapter # 2 will take Jack's seat on the board

OCIA membership and finances are holding steady. Funding from the TOPP (Transition to Organic Partnership) program will be ending in 2026. TOPP was very helpful to OCIA's marketing efforts. Going forward, our organization will have to make some financial adjustments to account for this loss of funding. I'm confident OCIA can continue forward and adjust its marketing budget accordingly.

Internationally, I am sad to announce OCIA will be ceasing operations in the country of Nicaragua. The current political leadership in Nicaragua makes it virtually impossible for an outside business entity to operate there in an effective manner. OCIA will now focus its Central American membership efforts in the countries of Honduras and Costa Rica.

For producers in the USA, I'd like to remind everyone that the OCCSP (Organic Certification Cost Share Program) is now available after a one year hiatus. Please contact OCIA for your paid organic invoices for 2025 and 2026. In addition, Chapter fee expenses are acceptable as well. These paid invoices can then be submitted to your local County FSA (Farm Service Agency) office. 75% of your organic certification expenses can be reimbursed up to a total of $750 per year.

If your certification costs in 2025 and 2026 were greater than $1,000 total reimbursement for your operation would be $1,500! Please act quickly as the program ends 12/31/2026.

At last year's AGMM (Annual General Membership Meeting) an International Chapter was created. It was hoped a chapter such as this would appeal to farmers who are located far away from any of our existing chapters. Since inception, two farmers have joined the International Chapter - one from Kentucky and the other from Wyoming. I'm pleased to say the International Chapter is working as planned and is another way to encourage more farmers to certify through OCIA.

Thanks again for all who certify through OCIA. Organic certification differentiates your crop from others and creates a value-added product. With the recent downward trend in conventional agriculture prices please encourage your farming neighbors and friends to consider going organic. It is my belief organic production is better for the environment, better for the consumer, and better for the farmer too. I look forward to seeing all of you at next year's AGMM in Council Bluffs, IA on February 11th, 2027!

CHRIS JAWORSKI
OCIA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT





Treasurer's Message

It's the middle of the busy harvest season around me and we just received over 4 inches of rain putting a halt to our local area farmers' efforts. Mother Nature can't seem to decide if she wants it to be late summer (projected temps in the high 60's coming) or if she'll finally bring the cooler autumnal weather we've been longing for.

With the completion of TOPP approaching and the cessation of those funds, OCIA staff continues to evaluate income, cut expenses and save wherever possible. Being down some in membership numbers, we're hopeful to break even with 2025 by the end of the year so there is minimal to no negative impact on our bottom line.

Thus far, 2026 has been a positive year financially as we build up our accounts in preparation for future years without TOPP monies. Overall income is up from last year with an increase in certifications. The board is looking forward to our upcoming in-person meeting to evaluate the past year with the goal of no immediate fee increases - but time will tell if that is the plan.

Realistically, we'll need a year's experience to get a clear picture of how best to operate without any special program grants/monies contributing to the bottom line. Our goal is to consistently operate in a fiscally responsible manner without additional support while keeping costs to our members minimal and competitive.

Well, I hope you have a safe and prosperous harvest, and a magical and memorable holiday season!

CHRISTIAN EVANS
OCIA INTERNATIONAL TREASURER



Upcoming OCIA Events

Mexico CGG and Processor Training:

- December 1st - 4th
- Veracruz Mexico
- More Information: https://ocia.org/events/

Holiday Office Closures:

- December 24, 2026
- December 25, 2026
- January 1, 2027

2027 Annual General Membership Meeting

February 11, 2027 – Holiday Inn & Suites Ameristar, Council Bluffs, IA. Register by February 3. Hotel block rate ends January 19.



Executive Director Message

Greetings OCIA International Members,

OCIA International wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We sincerely thank you for your continued support of OCIA International. We remain committed to moving forward and implementing positive improvements each year.

Our goal has been to improve clarity and consistency in communicating regulatory requirements to operations, and we hope you find our communications clear, consistent, and helpful.

As a reminder, noncompliances are a normal part of the organic certification process. They are not intended to be punitive or overly critical; rather, they are required by organic regulations. Operators are expected to respond to noncompliance notices promptly and thoroughly so that OCIA can fulfill its responsibilities to our accrediting bodies.

We also encourage you to seek support and insights from fellow chapter members and certified organic farmers. As your certifier, OCIA is prohibited from offering consulting services or technical advice on how to correct specific noncompliances. If issues are not addressed adequately, OCIA is required to proceed with the next steps in the compliance process, which may include proposed suspension or other adverse actions. Timely and complete responses help avoid these outcomes. I encourage you to contact our team for any assistance we are permitted to provide.

December 1, 2026 marked the end of the Transition to Organic Partnership Program with the USDA. OCIA is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate during this partnership and looks forward to future opportunities with the USDA.

Brandon Hill will remain on the OCIA staff, filling the marketing position at OCIA International and the Executive Director position with OCIA Research and Education. Brandon and I will work together on grants to fund the mission of OCIA Research and Education. I look forward to this new collaboration between OCIA International and OCIA Research and Education as we move ahead with shared goals and objectives.

Be sure to visit our website at www.ocia.org for information about upcoming events, including trade shows and local farm tours. If you're hosting a farm tour, please let us know so we can help spread the word by listing it on our site.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our outstanding team at OCIA International. The commitment, integrity, inspiration, and friendships within our organization are truly remarkable, and I am deeply grateful for every member of the OCIA team. Each staff member demonstrates relentless effort, and it is a source of immense pride to lead this team. Their dedication and hard work continue to inspire me as we navigate the journey ahead – truly, they help me sail this ship.

OCIA International is committed to supporting our certified operators with high-quality service and clear communication. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Please follow our new YouTube Channel for great organic certification content:

https://www.youtube.com/@ociainternationalinc/

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2027!

AMANDA BREWSTER
OCIA INTERNATIONAL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OCIA Research & Education

OCIA Research and Education Mission

The mission of OCIA Research and Education (R&E) is to support farmer driven research, on farm and at research institutions, including exploratory and demonstration projects. We facilitate connections between farmers, researchers, consumers and decision-makers and educate organic producers and local and global communities regarding organic farming and foods.

Organic Micro Grant Program

The Organic Micro Grants Program supports small, high-impact projects that advance organic agriculture and benefits multiple producers, processors, and/or consumers. Funding is intended to encourage innovation, education, and practical research that can be replicated and shared across regions. Projects must clearly support organic agriculture and align with the OCIA Research & Education mission.

Typical award amounts range from $500 to $3000. Projects must be completed within one year of approval. A progress report is due at the mid-point and a final report is required upon completion. Final reports should not exceed two pages.

Submit a completed Organic Micro Grant Application (https://ocia.org/research-education/micro-grants/). Applications are reviewed every year by the Board of Directors. Please submit your completion application to abrewster@ocia.org.



Scholarship

The purpose of the OCIA Research and Education scholarship is to support students pursuing education in agriculture or agricultural - related fields. This scholarship is intended to encourage leadership, innovation, and service within the agricultural sector by investing in students committed to advancing agricultural education, sustainability, and community engagement.

Scholarship Award

- Award Amount $1,500
- Number of Awards: 1-3
- Funds may be used for:
  - Tuition and Fees
  - Books and educational materials
  - Required program expenses

Please completed scholarship application available at (https://ocia.org/research-education/scholarships/) Please submit your completed application to abrewster@ocia.org.





OCIA Staff Workforce Development



Workforce Development Training Recap:

This September, the OCIA Staff gathered for two days of growth in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The workforce development training focused on working smarter, communicating better and taking care of ourselves along the way.

The week kicked off Monday evening with dinner and a round of axe throwing, a fun (and surprisingly competitive) way to reconnect before the work began.

Tuesday, September 15, opened with a welcome and icebreakers from Amanda, followed by two sessions led by Connie Karr. In *Managing Workloads Under Pressure,* Connie shared techniques for handling high volumes of work efficiently without compromising quality, while protecting our mental wellness. That afternoon, *Time Management & Inspector Relationships* brought those ideas home to organic certification specifically: setting priorities, meeting deadlines, and keeping quality high. The day closed with *Inspector Collaboration,* a look at how we maintain strong working relationships with our inspectors and build a network that supports everyone.

Wednesday, September 16 shifted the focus inward with three sessions from Amy McCae: *Empathetic Leadership, Mindfulness at Work,* and *Stress Less & Communication*. Cindy then led an update on *Accreditation*, and the day wrapped with an O*pen Policy Session* for questions and discussion.

A big thank you to our presenters and to everyone who made the trip. We left with practical tools, fresh prespective, and a stronger team.







2027 OCIA

Annual General Membership Meeting

Join OCIA International February 11th, in Council Bluffs, Iowa

OCIA International's 2027 Annual General Membership meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn & Suites Ameristar, February 11th in Council Bluffs, IA. The one day event will provide OCIA operators opportunities to connect with peers, board members and OCIA International Staff. Attendees will also have the opportunity to learn about microgrant and scholarship opportunities.

Attendees with voting rights will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed 2027 Budget and elect the 2027 Board of Directors.

Comprehensive informational packets are available on the OCIA website under "events". The packets, available in both English and Spanish, include information about:

- AGMM Agenda
- Hotel Reservations
- Registration
- and more!

Members who plan to attend the AGMM should be sure to register no later than February 3, 2027.

Room Reservations are available at a block rate until January 19, 2027. To make reservations, call 712-322-9232 and mention OCIA International, for the group rate.









OCIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

2026 OCIA INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Jaworski, President, USA
Kelsey Sheehan, Vice President, CAN
Carolyn Lane, Secretary, USA
Christian Evans, Treasurer, USA
Nate Powell - Palm, Chair, USA
Matt Adams, USA
Chris Barnett, USA
Amanda Brewster,
Executive Director USA

2026 OCIA R & E BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Driscoll, President, USA
Randy Mosel, Treasurer, USA
Aastha Gautam, Secretary, CAN
Kelsey Sheehan, USA
Amanda Brewster, Chair USA

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Jeff Kienast
Randy Mosel
Dale Maass
AL -- Amanda Brewster

INTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Jeff Kienast, Chair
Jake Geiger
Scott Shriver
Larry Stanislav
AL -- Cindy Elder

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Jack Geiger
Rebecca Talmadge

IMPARTIALITY COMMITTEE

Amanda Brewster, Chair
Kelsey Sheehan
Chris Jaworski
Kestrel Burcham

INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE

Christian Evans, Chair
Jack Geiger
Dale Maass
Denise Olson
Kelsey Sheehan
AL -- Amanda Brewster

EXTERNAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Carolyn Lane, Chair
Amy Krasne
Demetria Hill
Walter Horodyski
Marg Laberge
Rick Schuchardt
Kelsey Sheehan
AL - Amanda Brewster



OCIA Field Signs for Sale

Aluminum “No Spray Zone” signs are currently for sale at $20 each plus shipping/handling.

- Call us at 402-477-2323
- Email: info@ocia.org

OCIA INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE
5910 S 58th Ste. B
Lincoln, NE 68516
Phone: (402) 477-2323
Fax: (402) 477-4325

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Amanda Brewster, Ext. 325
abrewster@ocia.org

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
Deana McKinstry, Ext. 314
dmckinstry@ocia.org

ACCREDITATION & INSPECTOR SERVICES
Cindy Elder, Ext. 327
celder@ocia.org

TC ADMINISTRATOR
Sallie Gonzalez, Ext. 331
sgonzalez@ocia.org

US REGIONAL OFFICE
Jessie Gregath, Ext. 377
jgregath@ocia.org

Shelby Workman, Ext. 310
sworkman@ocia.org

CANADA OFFICE
Julie Bernier
11423 15 Ave. SW
Edmonton, AB T6W 0Z8
Phone: (780) 851-9482
Fax: (888) 823-3372
jbernier@ocia.org

MEXICO OFFICE
Julia Perez
5 de Mayo #108-9
Oaxaca de Juarez
Oaxca 68000
Phone: (+52 951) 5012099
Cell: (+521) 951 1981220
jperez@ocia.org

Karla Zarate Brito, Ext. 378
kbrito@ocia.org

PERU OFFICE
Ignacia Paredes Trejos
Calle Monte Rosa 255 piso 4
Chacarilla del Estanque
Santiago de Surco - Lima
Phone: (511) 625-9725
Cell: 51-955-854-924
iparedes@ocia.org

JAPAN OFFICE
Yutaka Maruyama
Tokyo, Japan
ocia-jp@io.ocn.ne.jp

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Brandon Hill, Ext. 100
bhill@ocia.org

OCIA RESEARCH & EDUCATION
bhill@ocia.org



OCIA CHAPTER ADMINISTRATORS

COLORADO

ST ORGANICS
(Nebraska, Wyoming)
Rebecca Talmadge
PO Box 28
Hereford, CO 80732
Phone: 970-895-2296
storganics@gmail.com

ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS OCIA CHAPTER 1
Ron Ackerman
29087 N 2850 E Road
Chenoa, IL 61726-5722
Phone: 815-945-5722
ronnga@frontier.com

IOWA

OCIA of Iowa Chapter 1, Inc
Amy Krasne
14751 260th St.
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Phone: 402-639-6041
Fax: 402-939-0369
iaociach1@gmail.com

Southeast Iowa Organic Association Chapter 3
Pam Streeter
4284 215th Ave
Ottumwa, IA 52501
Phone: 641-799-5900
dpstreeter@gmail.com

OCIA INTERNATIONAL

OCIA International Chapter Members
Chris Jaworski - OCIA President
Phone: 920-660-0236
Fax: 402-939-0369
Email:
jaws8753radtke@gmail.com

KANSAS

Eastern Kansas 2
Jackie Keller
2222 SW Glick Rd.
Topeka, KS 66614
Phone: 785-633-4621
kellerjackie99@gmail.com

Midwest Organic Producers, Kansas 3
Demetria Hill
PO Box 175
Jennings, KS 67643
Phone: 785-678-7006
deme.hill@outlook.com

MINNESOTA

OCIA Minnesota Chapter 1
Rochelle VanderWoude
PO Box 13
Red Lake Falls, MN 56170
Phone: 507-920-6537
mnociamn.1@gmail.com

NEBRASKA

OCIA of Nebraska
Kim Mosel
86536 State Spur 45A
Page, NE 68766
Phone: 402-620-2701
ociane1@yahoo.com
nebraskaocia.org

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Organic Growers
Allan Miller
8335 93rd St. SE
Ellendale, ND 58436
Phone: 701-349-4587
akmiller@drtel.net

North Central OCIA 2
Twyla Stroh
4275 39th Ave. SE
Tappen, ND 58487
Phone: 701-226-0632

OHIO

Ohio Chapter 2 of OCIA
Walter Horodyski
7780 State Rte. 88
Kinsman, OH 44428
wjrhorodyski@gmail.com

SOUTH DAKOTA

OCIA South Dakota 1
Wilford Secker
12933 301st Ave.
Selby, SD 57472
Phone 605-649-6327
wsecker@venturecomm.net

OCIA South Dakota 2
Sarah Kluge
9620 173rd Ave SE
Fairmount, ND 58030
Phone: 320-267-6417
svanderbeek@live.com

WISCONSIN

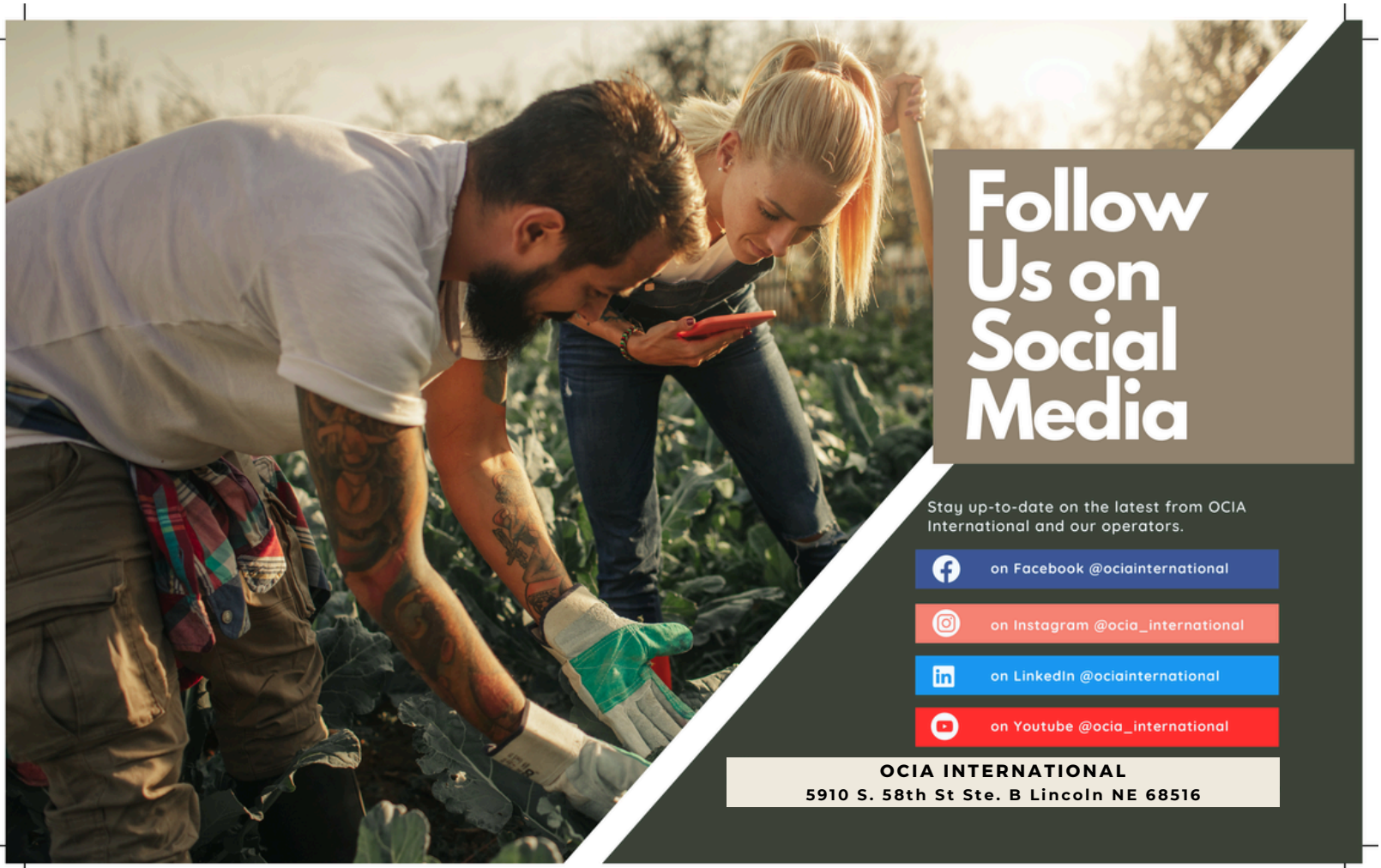
North East Wisconsin Chapter 2
Chris Jaworski
7899 Regal Lane
Pulaski, WI 54162
Phone: 920-660-0236
jaws8753radtke@gmail.com

CANADA

OCIA Chapter Members Association Canada
Marg Laberge
4829 47 Ave.
St Paul, AB TOA 3A3
Phone: 780-614-4168
Fax: 888-823-3372
ociachaptermembers@gmail.com

GUATEMALA

Guatemala Chapter 1
Dariush Echeverria
Phone: 502-233-7877
dariush_echeverria@hotmail.com


Follow Us on Social Media
Stay up-to-date on the latest from OCIA International and our operators.
on Facebook @ociainternational
on Instagram @ocia_international
on LinkedIn @ociainternational
on Youtube @ocia_international
OCIA INTERNATIONAL
5910 S. 58th St Ste. B Lincoln NE 68516