



Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2018 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-18-0003

Publication Date: March 7, 2018

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on May 24, 2018

Program Solicitation Information

Funding Opportunity Title: Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-18-0003

Announcement Type: Initial

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: [10.170](#)

Dates: Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 24, 2018, through [Grants.gov](#). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) to award grants to eligible State departments of agriculture to carry out projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Approximately \$72.1 million, less USDA administrative costs, will be available to fund applications under this solicitation.

This announcement identifies the eligibility criteria for SCBGP projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a SCBGP award.

Stakeholder Input: The AMS seeks comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program. Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice via e-mail to: AMSGrants@ams.usda.gov. This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms. In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program RFA**.

Highlights and Changes for 2018

Below are highlights of major changes to the program since last year.

- Standardized several of the sections to align the information with other AMS grant programs, including *4.8 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements*, *5.0 Application Review Information*, and *6.0 Award Administration Information*.
- The State department of agriculture's Grant Administration Budget Narrative should include travel for the attendance of at least one staff member who directly implements the SCBGP at a national SCBGP coordinators' meeting during the life of the grant agreement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1.0 Funding Opportunity Description | 5 |
| 1.1 Legislative Authority | 5 |
| 1.2 Purpose | 5 |
| 1.3 Project Types | 5 |
| 1.4 Development of Proposals | 6 |
| 2.0 Award Information | 8 |
| 2.1 Type of Federal Assistance | 8 |
| 2.2 Type of Applications | 8 |
| 2.3 Available Funding..... | 8 |
| 2.4 Federal Award Period Duration | 9 |
| 2.5 Block Grant Amounts Available to Each Applicant | 9 |
| 3.0 Eligibility Information | 10 |
| 3.1 Eligible Applicants..... | 10 |
| 3.2 Solely Enhance the Competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. Territory Grown Specialty Crops | 11 |
| 3.3 Benefit More Than One Product or Organization..... | 11 |
| 3.4 Cost-Sharing and Matching..... | 11 |
| 3.5 Performance Measures | 12 |
| 3.6 Projects Attempting to Disparage the Work of Another Organization..... | 12 |
| 3.7 Supplanting..... | 12 |
| 4.0 Application and Submission Information | 12 |
| 4.1 Obtaining an Application Package | 12 |
| 4.2 Application Checklist | 13 |
| 4.3 Content and Form of Application Submission | 13 |
| 4.4 Submission Date and Time | 14 |
| 4.5 Intergovernmental Review | 14 |
| 4.6 Funds Not Applied For | 14 |
| 4.7 Funding Restrictions | 14 |
| 4.8 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements | 26 |
| 5.0 Application Review Information | 28 |
| 6.0 Award Administration Information | 29 |
| 6.1 Award Notices..... | 29 |
| 6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements | 29 |
| 6.3 Reporting | 29 |
| 7.0 Agency Contacts | 30 |
| 7.1 Team Lead..... | 30 |
| 7.2 Grants Management Specialists | 30 |
| 7.3 Address | 30 |
| 7.4 Grants.gov Questions | 30 |
| 8.0 Other Information | 30 |
| 8.1 Release of Application Information | 30 |
| 8.2 Equal Opportunity Statement..... | 31 |
| 8.3 Prohibition on Using Funds under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements | 31 |
| 8.4 Paperwork Reduction | 32 |

1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative authority is provided under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 ([7 U.S.C. § 1621 note](#)) and amended under section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 (the Farm Bill). SCBGP is currently implemented under [7 CFR § 1291](#) (published March 27, 2009; 74 FR 13313).

1.2 PURPOSE

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) assists State departments of agriculture in the 50 States, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in solely enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. grown specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). A State department of agriculture is the agency, commission, or department of a State government responsible for agriculture within the State.

1.3 PROJECT TYPES

States are encouraged to develop projects pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

- enhancing food safety;
- improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, developing “Good Agricultural Practices,” “Good Handling Practices,” “Good Manufacturing Practices,” and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers and processors;
- investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- pest and disease control;
- increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- sustainability.

1.3.1 PROJECTS MORE RELEVANT FOR OTHER FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

Entities that engage in projects that support the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase and/or include technologies for benefit redemption systems should consider submitting those projects to the [Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program \(FINI\)](#).

Entities that engage in projects that support domestic farmers’ markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, and local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products should consider submitting those projects to the [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) and [Local Food Promotion Program](#).

Entities that engage in projects that support biobased products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities (development of biobased products) should see the USDA energy website at <http://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS

1.4.1 STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESPONSIBILITIES

State departments of agriculture are responsible for developing proposals and overseeing funded projects. Applicants must structure proposals so that the State department of agriculture maintains control of the project objectives, sets policy, and ensures that projects are carried out in accordance with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations as well as with the Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions. State departments of agriculture are also responsible for ensuring that subrecipients maintain appropriate records and follow all applicable Federal statutes and regulations as well as the [Grant Agreement and General Terms and Conditions](#).

State departments of agriculture must ensure that proposals are appropriate for the SCBGP by reviewing section [1.2 Purpose](#). Contact a specialist listed in section [7.2 Grants Management Specialists](#) if there is any question about whether or not the project qualifies for SCBGP.

1.4.2 GROWER-LEVEL PROJECTS

State departments of agriculture are encouraged to prioritize and expand funding to projects that are supported by and address the needs of U.S. specialty crop growers. For example, if a State department of agriculture receives multiple research or marketing project proposals, SCBGP encourages it to prioritize the proposals supported by grower-level groups.

1.4.3 OUTREACH TO IDENTIFY FUNDING PRIORITIES

State departments of agriculture are encouraged to perform outreach prior to the development and release of the State's request for proposals or applications to interested parties, including beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, through a transparent process of receiving and considering public comment to identify State SCBGP funding priorities. The State department of agriculture should conduct this outreach to ensure that the grant applications it submits to the SCBGP have been developed with proven and justified public support.

Beginning Farmer or Rancher is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

1.4.4 COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

State departments of agriculture are encouraged to develop their State Plans through a competitive review process to ensure maximum public input and benefit. The competitive review process should follow State policies and procedures and include the use of an independent review panel of experts or qualified individuals, overseen by State department of agriculture officials, to evaluate and score applications and recommend project proposals for selection. The review panel should also provide a recommended award amount for project proposals.

This review should include the factors and reasons for selecting an applicant and any changes in project proposal ranks/scores that may occur during the review process. All documentation affecting the decision to approve, disapprove, defer, or otherwise not fund an application should be maintained in an accessible, centralized program file.

Review panel members must be free from conflicts of interest and conduct fair and impartial reviews. The SCBGP encourages State departments of agriculture to require and keep on file written conflict of interest disclosures from their review panel members. Conflicts of interest may include:

- Having served as advisors/advisees of the applicant;
- Having collaborated with the applicant over a designated amount of time; currently affiliated with, previously employed by, or are being considered for employment at the institution(s) of the applicant(s);
- Having a personal/familial relationship with the applicant(s); or
- Having participated in a consulting/financial arrangement with the applicant in recent years.

State staff who are directly involved with the management of the grant program or who meet any of the criteria above should also not participate in the review panel. Conflicts of interest have the potential to diminish the credibility of the selection process and leave the State vulnerable to challenges about the fairness of its competitive review process.

In addition, the SCBGP encourages State departments of agriculture to notify successful and unsuccessful grant applicants about the outcome of the competitive process as it relates to the applicants' proposals.

Finally, the SCBGP encourages State departments of agriculture during their competitive review process to review funding requests carefully for activities funded previously to ensure:

- The projects are likely to become self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent upon publicly and privately granted funds;
- Funding decisions are based on the applicant's/subrecipient's past performance; and
- Specialty crop stakeholders, other than the applicant, individuals, and organizations involved in the project, support the continuation of the project.
- Examples include:
 - If the applicant is a university and the research proposal will establish control techniques for a specific pecan disease, the proposal might identify a pecan growers' association that supports the project because this was the organization's number one research priority.
 - If the applicant is a non-profit association requesting funds to promote apples, the proposal might identify specific apple growers that support the project because they are interested in increasing their market share.

1.4.5 MULTI-STATE PARTNERSHIPS

A multi-state partnership is a project that implements activities with measurable outcomes that benefit two or more U.S. States and/or Territories. Multi-state partnerships are encouraged and should provide solutions to problems that cross state boundaries including, but not limited to, food safety; plant pests and disease; research; crop-specific projects addressing common issues; and marketing and promotion. State departments of agriculture with multi-state partnership projects can also consider submitting those projects to the [Specialty Crop Multi-State Program \(SCMP\)](#).

1.4.6 DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end - they have a limited duration. One way to think about this is that a project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks. Examples of projects include:

- Researching new cultivars
- Providing outreach opportunities on specialty crops to youth, families, seniors, and the overall community
- Marketing apples through a targeted promotional campaign

Activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects might include:

- Hiring personnel
- Purchasing special purpose equipment
- Holding an educational workshop
- Planting specialty crops
- Distributing product promotional materials

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide support to successful SCBGP applications.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. The SCBGP will review all new applications for conformance with the criteria in section [5.0 Application Review Information](#) and may require the applicant to provide additional information or clarification by a specified date.

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

It is anticipated that approximately \$72.1 million will be available to fund applications in FY 2018. Enactment of additional Federal continuing resolutions or appropriations may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

SCBGP projects must be completed within 3 years. The grant period must begin no later than September 30, 2018, and end no later than September 29, 2021. The applicant must indicate the start and end dates on the SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” in block 17. SCBGP encourages State departments of agriculture to allow ample time for completion of all projects.

2.5 BLOCK GRANT AMOUNTS AVAILABLE TO EACH APPLICANT

Subject to the amount of available funding as set forth above in section [2.3 Available Funding](#), each eligible State department of agriculture applicant that submits an application that the SCBGP reviews and accepts is eligible to receive the available grant allocation as indicated below. Each State department of agriculture is eligible to receive an estimated base grant of approximately \$240,527.67 and an amount based on the average of the most recent available value of specialty crop cash receipts in the State (2016 calendar year estimates) and the acreage of specialty crop production in the State (2012 Census of Agriculture). The data source for specialty crop cash receipts and acreage is the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, and National Agricultural Statistics Service.

| State Department of Agriculture | Available Grant Allocation |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Alabama | 496,282.66 |
| Alaska | 252,446.56 |
| American Samoa | 283,699.85 |
| Arizona | 1,499,506.70 |
| Arkansas | 351,017.20 |
| California | 22,625,377.62 |
| Colorado | 874,491.38 |
| Connecticut | 414,125.60 |
| Delaware | 362,304.41 |
| District of Columbia | 240,527.67 |
| Florida | 4,336,299.97 |
| Georgia | 1,335,031.91 |
| Guam | 242,720.90 |
| Hawaii | 501,417.85 |
| Idaho | 2,066,120.67 |
| Illinois | 690,930.86 |
| Indiana | 495,213.15 |
| Iowa | 334,185.32 |
| Kansas | 348,848.12 |
| Kentucky | 340,694.00 |
| Louisiana | 406,749.14 |
| Maine | 585,268.02 |
| Maryland | 497,589.93 |
| Massachusetts | 435,257.33 |
| Michigan | 2,148,925.46 |
| Minnesota | 1,395,110.27 |
| Mississippi | 441,106.98 |

| State Department of Agriculture | Available Grant Allocation |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Missouri | 441,335.88 |
| Montana | 1,579,835.72 |
| Nebraska | 695,700.72 |
| Nevada | 294,861.17 |
| New Hampshire | 297,674.98 |
| New Jersey | 797,271.92 |
| New Mexico | 610,958.17 |
| New York | 1,361,967.44 |
| North Carolina | 1,291,517.17 |
| North Dakota | 3,005,279.98 |
| Northern Mariana Islands | 242,475.66 |
| Ohio | 683,703.44 |
| Oklahoma | 630,345.54 |
| Oregon | 2,065,898.52 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,127,698.87 |
| Puerto Rico | 534,546.63 |
| Rhode Island | 276,574.27 |
| South Carolina | 560,967.20 |
| South Dakota | 347,813.76 |
| Tennessee | 555,164.89 |
| Texas | 2,096,969.76 |
| U.S. Virgin Islands | 241,754.85 |
| Utah | 357,415.84 |
| Vermont | 332,518.44 |
| Virginia | 555,881.86 |
| Washington | 5,098,305.94 |
| West Virginia | 295,630.63 |
| Wisconsin | 1,423,305.22 |
| Wyoming | 352,795.72 |

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are State departments of agriculture in the 50 States, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands. A State department of agriculture is the agency, commission, or department of a State government responsible for agriculture within the State.

SCBGP expects that State departments of agriculture will consult with specialty crop growers, processors, and/or distributors before developing SCBGP project applications to ensure maximum public input and benefit. These stakeholders should play an important role in development of project goals and objectives, in implementing the project plan, and in evaluating and disseminating project results and outcomes.

3.2 SOLELY ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF U.S. OR U.S. TERRITORY GROWN SPECIALTY CROPS

Project(s) must **solely** enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. See the [SCBGP website](#) for a definition of specialty crops and processed products, including a list of eligible specialty crops and ineligible commodities. Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact on solely enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.

3.3 BENEFIT MORE THAN ONE PRODUCT OR ORGANIZATION

Applications for grant funds should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

SCBGP will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, recipients and subrecipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

The following are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects:

Examples of Acceptable Projects

- A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
- A non-profit organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit its specialty crop members.
- A single farmer erects high tunnels on his/her property to extend the growing season of tomatoes and lettuce and conducts a field day and farm tour to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the production methods.

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual businesses.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase its membership.

3.4 COST-SHARING AND MATCHING

The SCBGP does not have a Federal cost-sharing or matching requirement.

3.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP on a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. To fulfill this requirement, AMS collaborated with stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to develop a listing of measurable outcomes and indicators that quantifiably measure performance toward fulfilling the program’s purpose of solely enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all States and Territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including OMB, U.S. Congress, the agricultural community, and the public.

Each project submitted in the State Plan **must** include at least one of the eight outcomes listed in the [SCBGP Evaluation Plan](#) and at least one of the indicators listed in the selected outcome(s). The progress of the one or more outcomes and indicators selected will need to be reported in the Annual Performance Report, and the results will be reported in the Final Performance Report. Please refer to the [SCBGP Evaluation Plan](#) for more information.

3.6 PROJECTS ATTEMPTING TO DISPARAGE THE WORK OF ANOTHER ORGANIZATION

It is unallowable for projects to disparage the mission, goals, and/or actions of another organization.

3.7 SUPPLANTING

SCBGP funds must supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace State funds. Additionally, Federal funding may not replace State funding that is required under [7 U.S.C. § 1621\(d\)\(3\)](#). In instances where a question of supplanting arises, the applicant or recipient will be required to substantiate that the reduction in non-Federal resources occurred for reasons other than the receipt or expected receipt of Federal funds.

General Supplanting Definition. A State organization reduces State funds for an activity specifically because Federal funds are available (or expected to be available) to fund that same activity.

- **Example:** State funds are appropriated for a stated purpose and Federal funds are awarded for that same purpose. (If a State has \$50.00 budgeted for a specialty crop program and the Federal government awards a \$100.00 grant for the same specialty crop program, the total project must expend \$150.00 – the State cannot remove the original \$50.00 and use it for something else).

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 OBTAINING AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. We urge applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see Grants.gov’s [Apply for Grants](#) webpage. This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in section [4.8 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements](#).

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the CFDA number “10.170,” or the SCBGP Funding Opportunity Number “USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-18-0003.”

4.2 APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application must include the following:

- Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance
- Form SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
- State Plan Narrative

4.3 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.3.1 FORM SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required: Form SF-424 is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the instructions. However, you must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

| Block | Instruction |
|--|---|
| #1 Type of Submission | Check Application. |
| #2 Type of Application | Check New. |
| #4 and #5 | Not applicable. |
| # 8c Organizational Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) | Applicant DUNS# for the Organization submitting the application. See D&B Request a DUNS Number. |
| #8d Address | Enter the State department of agriculture street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code. |
| #10 Name of Federal Agency | AMS, USDA |
| #11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number | Enter 10.170 – Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill. |
| #12 Funding Opportunity Number | Enter USDA-AMS-TM-SCBGP-G-18-0003. |
| #13 Competition Identification Number | Not applicable. |
| #14 Areas Affected by Project | Enter cities, counties, States affected by project. |
| #15 Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project | A detailed description of each project is not necessary. |
| #16a Congressional Districts for Applicant | Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located. |
| #16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project | Enter the Congressional district where your project will be performed. Write “All” if the projects will be performed in more than one location. |
| #17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date | Your grant period cannot be more than 3 years in length. Start date must begin no later than September 30, 2018 and end no later than September 29, 2021. |
| #18 Estimated Funding | Federal =Total Specialty Crop Block Grant funds requested. |
| #19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process? | This initiative is subject to intergovernmental review . Consult this website (https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc) to determine applicability in your State. |

4.3.2 FORM SF-424B ASSURANCES FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS (REQUIRED)

Required: Form SF-424B is available via the opportunity at www.Grants.gov.

4.3.3 STATE PLAN NARRATIVE (REQUIRED)

The applicant must submit a State Plan that includes the content required in the [Grant Administration Template](#) and [Project Profile Template](#). The Grant Administration Template will be provided once at the beginning of the State Plan; the applicant will use the Project Profile Template for each project submitted through the State Plan.

Narrative Format

Page size for the narrative must be 8.5 inches by 11 inches. The acceptable font size is 11 or 12 pitch with all margins at 1 inch. The State Plan should include a series of project profiles that detail the necessary information to fulfill the goals and objectives of the project. For examples of acceptable formats, please see [Grant Administration](#), [Project Profile](#), and the [Sample State Plan](#).

The State department of agriculture's *Grant Administration Budget Narrative* should include travel for the attendance of at least one staff member who directly implements the SCBGP at a national SCBGP coordinators' meeting during the life of the grant agreement.

4.4 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants must submit applications via [Grants.gov](#) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 24, 2018. SCBGP cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding.

4.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

SCBGP is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Refer to https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

4.6 FUNDS NOT APPLIED FOR

Eligible State department of agriculture applicants who do not apply for or do not request all available funding during the specified grant application period will forfeit all or that portion of available funding not requested. SCBGP will allocate funds not applied for, by a date determined by SCBGP, pro rata to the remaining State department of agriculture applicants.

4.7 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.7.1 LIMIT ON ADMINISTRATION COSTS

Administration costs are defined as indirect costs and are limited to 8 percent of the total Federal funds provided under the award per [section 10010\(4\) of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79](#). The State department of agriculture must notify sub-applicants of the limit on indirect costs in its request for proposals/applications so that indirect costs requested by sub-applicants plus indirect administration costs requested by the State department of agriculture do not exceed 8 percent of the State's grant request. If the State department of agriculture does not take the full 8 percent of indirect costs, individual subapplicants may claim the remaining portion of these costs at the discretion of the State. State-approved indirect costs in subapplicant projects may not exceed 8 percent of that project's budget. See the information below on presenting direct and indirect costs consistently.

Presenting Direct and Indirect Costs Consistently

Applicants are responsible for presenting direct and indirect costs appropriately and consistently and must not include costs associated with their organization’s indirect cost rate agreement as direct costs. In addition, a cost may not be allocated as an indirect cost if also incurred as a direct cost for the same purpose and vice versa. For further information on how to determine if a cost is indirect or direct, please see the [Indirect Cost Decision Tree](#).

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project or program, service, or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typically, direct costs include, but are not limited to, compensation of employees who work directly on the award to include salaries and fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported project or program.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) defined at [2 CFR § 200.56](#) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Refer to [2 CFR §§ 200.413](#) and [414](#) for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should typically be treated as indirect costs. However, charging these costs as direct costs may be appropriate where all the following conditions are met:

- (1) administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
- (2) individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- (3) such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the Federal awarding agency; and
- (4) the costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

Typical Indirect Costs by Organization Type

| Type of Organization | Typical Indirect Costs |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Non-Profits | General administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, depreciation or use allowances on buildings and equipment, and the costs of operating and maintaining facilities. |
| Colleges and Universities | Equipment and capital improvements, operation and maintenance expenses, library expenses, general administration and general expenses, departmental administration, sponsored projects administration, student administration and services, depreciation and use allowances, and interest on debt associated with certain buildings. |
| State and Local Governments | State/local-wide central service costs, general administration of the applicant department or agency, accounting and personnel services performed within the applicant department or agency, depreciation or use allowances on buildings and equipment, and the costs of operating and maintaining facilities. |

4.7.2 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All SCBGP awards are subject to the most recent [General Award Terms and Conditions](#), *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR part 200)*, and other laws and regulations affecting Federal assistance.

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing the associated Federal cost principles should contact the SCBGP using the contact information listed under [7.0 Agency Contacts](#).

| Item | Description |
|--|--|
| Advisory Councils | <i>Unallowable</i> for costs incurred by advisory councils or committees. |
| Alcoholic Beverages | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for alcoholic beverages.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for projects under the SCBGP when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of an eligible processed product (products prepared or created for the purposes of promoting a specialty crop but that require other ingredients are considered a processed product). A processed product is defined as a product that constitutes greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.</p> |
| Buildings and Land – Construction | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees). This also includes construction and construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for rental costs of land and building space. However, lease to own agreements (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) are not allowable. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>A <i>building</i> is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of people, animals, or property and having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.</p> |
| Aquaponics | <p><i>Allowable</i> as long as the cultivated crops are eligible specialty crops and the focus of the project is on the specialty crops and not the fish.</p> <p><u>Projects that are Acceptable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to determine whether carp, catfish, or tilapia are best for growing lettuce is acceptable. • A project to market broccoli grown through aquaponics is acceptable. • A project to compare the quality of lettuce grown in water to lettuce grown in a greenhouse is acceptable. |

| Item | Description |
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| | <p><u>Projects that are NOT Acceptable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to study whether lettuce or tomato produced the highest yield of tilapia is not acceptable. • A project to farm fish using an aquaponics system and then sell the fish is not acceptable. • A project to grow specialty crops where both the specialty crops and the fish are sold is not acceptable. <p>For more information on constructing or purchasing an aquaponics system, see Equipment-General Purpose and Equipment – Special Purpose.</p> |
| Conferences | <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of conferences as defined in 2 CFR § 200.432. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal applicant or subapplicant as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers’ fees, costs of meals (see Meals for restrictions) and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the applicant or subapplicant must report fees as program income (See Program Income).</p> <p>The SCBGP encourages the use of technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room.</p> |
| Contingency Provisions | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for miscellaneous and similar rainy-day funds for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening. Unallowable for working capital for activities/items not already in place.</p> |
| Contractual/Consultant Costs (Professional Services) | <p><i>Allowable subject to limitations below.</i> Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with the purchase of goods and/or the procurement of services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in a procurement relationship.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for contractor/consultant employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/). This does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.</p> <p>If rates exceed this amount, one of the following justifications must be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the steps you took to hire a contractor, which includes obtaining a cost/price analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to review and evaluate each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability. <p>OR</p> |

| Item | Description |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the complexity or uniqueness of the project, the pool of available and qualified contractors is limited. Therefore, the selected contractor's specialized qualifications necessitate hiring at a rate beyond a GS-15 step 10. (Please outline the unique qualifications of the contractor.) |
| Contributions and Donations | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, from the applicant or subapplicant to other entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A non-profit entity using grant funds to purchase produce to donate to other entities and individuals is unallowable. |
| Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Machines | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for the purchase/lease of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT equipment.</p> <p>The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has existing funding to expand the availability of SNAP EBT equipment and services at farmers markets through the Farmers Market Coalition and State SNAP agencies. Recipients should review the below options to determine which is most appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Farmers Market Coalition provides SNAP-authorized farmers markets and direct marketing farmers with free SNAP EBT equipment. State SNAP agencies or farmers market associations offer free SNAP EBT equipment to newly authorized farmers markets and direct marketing farmers. FNS SNAP and Farmers Markets resources provide additional EBT information. |
| Entertainment Costs | <p><i>Unallowable.</i> Entertainment costs include amusement, diversion, social activities, and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as bands, orchestras, dance groups, tickets to shows, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities).</p> |
| Equipment | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment or lease to own agreements (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for rental costs of general purpose equipment. Vehicles may be leased, but not purchased. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>For vehicle and equipment leases or rentals with an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000, rates should be in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable vehicles and equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the vehicle or equipment leased.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant award; |

| Item | Description |
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| | <p>2) Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible;</p> <p>3) The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization;</p> <p>4) Acquired in accordance with organizational practices;</p> <p>5) Must be used only to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant award;</p> <p>6) More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment;</p> <p>7) Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and</p> <p>8) Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable.</p> <p><u>Definitions</u></p> <p><i>Equipment</i> is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.</p> <p><i>Acquisition cost</i> means the cost of the asset, including the cost to prepare the asset for its intended use. Acquisition cost for equipment includes the net invoice price of the equipment, including the any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for its acquired purpose.</p> <p><i>General Purpose Equipment</i> means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.</p> <p><i>Special Purpose Equipment</i> is equipment used only for research, scientific, or technical activities.</p> |
| <p>Equipment – Information Technology Systems</p> | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for information technology systems having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established in accordance by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) by the recipient for financial statement purposes or \$5,000. Acquisition costs for software includes those development costs capitalized in accordance with GAAP.</p> <p>Information technology systems include computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources. Computing devices means machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically, including accessories (or “peripherals”) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. Examples of unallowable information technology systems include service contracts,</p> |

| Item | Description |
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| | <p>operating systems, printers, and computers that have an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for website development, mobile apps, etc., that are not considered to be information technology systems, but rather social media applications.</p> |
| Fines, Penalties, Damages and Other Settlements | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with, Federal, State, tribal, local or foreign laws and regulations.</p> |
| Fixed Amount Subawards | <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior written approval from AMS. A pass-through entity may provide subawards based on fixed amounts up to the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, provided that the subawards meet the requirements for fixed amount awards in 2 CFR § 200.201.</p> |
| Fundraising and Investment Management Costs | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions, regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used. This includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital.</p> |
| General Costs of Government | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Salaries and expenses of the Office of the Governor of a State or the chief executive of a local government or the chief executive of an Indian tribe; 2) Salaries and other expenses of a State legislature, tribal council, or similar local governmental body, such as a county supervisor, city council, school board, etc., whether incurred for purposes of legislation or executive direction; 3) Costs of the judicial branch of a government; 4) Costs of prosecutorial activities unless treated as a direct cost to a specific program if authorized by statute or regulation (however, this does not preclude the allowability of other legal activities of the Attorney General as described in 2 CFR § 200.435 Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringements); and 5) Costs of other general types of government services normally provided to the general public, such as fire and police, unless provided for as a direct cost under a program statute or regulation. |
| Goods or Services for Personal Use | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of goods or services for personal use of the applicant's or subapplicant's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.</p> |

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| Health and Nutrition Messaging | <p><i>Allowable</i> when health and nutrition information complies with regulations and policies of the:</p> <p><i>Federal Trade Commission</i> http://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/bureaus-offices/bureau-consumer-protection</p> <p>AND</p> <p><i>U.S. Food and Drug Administration</i> http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/default.htm.</p> <p>Nutrition and health claims must be truthful, not misleading or deceptive, and include adequate disclaimers if appropriate.</p> <p>Health and nutrition information should align with the most up-to-date Dietary Guidelines.</p> |
| Insurance and Indemnification | <p><i>Allowable</i> as indirect costs for insurance and indemnification.</p> |
| Lobbying | <p><i>Unallowable</i> as defined in 2 CFR § 200.450.</p> |
| Meals | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for breakfasts for conference attendees because it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for meal costs that are duplicated in meeting participant’s per diem or subsistence allowances.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for lunch or dinner meals if the costs are reasonable and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for meals consumed while in official travel status. They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization’s established written travel policies.</p> |
| Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of membership in any civic or community organization.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of membership in business, technical, and professional organizations.</p> |

| Item | Description |
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| Organization Costs | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for organization costs per 2 CFR § 200.455.</p> |
| Participant Support Costs | <p><i>Allowable</i> for such items as stipends or subsistence allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, and focus groups.</p> |
| Political Activities | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).</p> |
| Pre-Award Costs | <p><i>Allowable</i>, if such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of the project work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award.</p> <p>A recipient may incur pre-award costs up to 90 calendar days before SCBGP makes the award without prior approval from SCBGP. Expenses more than 90 calendar days pre-award require SCBGP prior approval. All costs incurred before SCBGP makes the award are at the applicant's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of an award imposes no obligation on SCBGP to award funds for such costs.</p> |
| Printing and Publications | <p><i>Allowable</i> to pay the cost of preparing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and publications relating to the project; however, the printing of hard copies is discouraged given the prevalence of electronic/virtual publication means</p> |
| Rearrangement and Reconversion Costs | <p><i>Allowable</i> as indirect costs incurred for ordinary and normal rearrangement and alteration of facilities.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> as direct costs with prior approval for special arrangements and alterations costs incurred specifically for the award. Rearrangement and reconversion costs are those incurred in restoring or rehabilitating the non-Federal entity's facilities to approximately the same condition existing immediately before the start of the grant agreement, less costs related to normal wear and tear.</p> |
| Salaries and Wages | <p><i>Allowable</i> as part of employee compensation for personnel services in proportion to the amount of time or effort an employee devotes to the grant-supported project or program during the period of performance under the Federal award, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Such costs must be incurred under formally established policies of the organization, be consistently applied, be reasonable for the services rendered, and be supported with adequate documentation.</p> <p>Salary and wage amounts charged to grant-supported projects or programs for personal services must be based on an adequate payroll distribution system that documents such distribution in accordance with generally accepted practices of like organizations.</p> |

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| | <p>Standards for payroll distribution systems are contained in the applicable cost principles (other than those for for-profit organizations).</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for project staff that devote time and effort to non-specialty crop specific venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc. where costs cannot be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: Salaries and wages for a farmers’ market manager to manage and advertise a farmers’ market that includes non-specialty crop items are unallowable, while salaries and wages for personnel to conduct a cooking demonstration on how to prepare fruits and vegetables are allowable. |
| <p>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of an Organization’s Image, Logo, or Brand Name</p> | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand rather than eligible specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A promotional campaign to increase sales of “STATE/COUNTY Grown” Watermelon is acceptable while increasing brand awareness of “XYZ Grown” generically is not. • Promoting tomatoes while including an organization’s logo in the promotion is acceptable, while generally promoting an organization’s logo is not. • Promotional items could say “Buy STATE/COUNTY Grown Apples” but not “XYZ Grown”, which promotes XYZ generically. • A promotional campaign to increase producer sales of “STATE/COUNTY Grown fruits and vegetables” is acceptable while increasing membership in “STATE/COUNTY Grown” generally is not. |
| <p>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of Venues that do not Align with Grant Program Purpose</p> | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs for promotion at non-specialty crop specific venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements could say “Buy Sweet Corn! It is the Best!” but not “Buy Local!” • Advertising educational sessions at a conference that solely benefits specialty crop growers are acceptable, while advertising a non-specialty crop specific local food conference is not. |
| <p>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotional Items, Gifts, Prizes, etc.</p> | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for promotional items, swag, gifts, prizes, memorabilia, and souvenirs.</p> |
| <p>Selling and Marketing Costs – Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts</p> | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of the value of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts (e.g., the \$5.00 value for a \$5.00 clip-out coupon).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (e.g., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) as long as they benefit more than a single program or organization.</p> |

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| Selling and Marketing Costs – Food for Displays, Tastings, Cooking Demonstrations | <i>Allowable</i> for food for displays, tastings, and cooking demonstrations with prior approval. |
| Selling and Marketing Costs – General Marketing Costs | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs designed to promote products that align with the purpose of the grant program.</p> |
| Selling and Marketing Costs – Sponsorships | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with sponsorships. A sponsorship is a form of advertising in which an organization uses grant funds to have its name and/or logo associated with certain events and where the organization does not necessarily know how the funds associated with sponsorship costs will be used. These costs also only benefit the organization offering funding, limiting the beneficiaries to the sponsor organization.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for the costs associated with fees for individuals or companies to have their specialty crop products placed at retail markets (i.e., slotting fees or allowances).</p> |
| Selling and Marketing Costs – Use of Meeting Rooms, Space, Exhibits for Non-Specialty Crop Activities | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with the use of trade shows, meeting rooms, displays, demonstrations, exhibits, and the rental of space for activities that do not solely promote specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the participation of raspberry and blueberry producers at a non-specialty crop specific international trade show to promote berries to an international audience is allowable, while renting a booth space for berry producers as well as wheat producers at an international trade show is not allowable. • Supporting the participation of farmers’ market managers at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable. • Supporting a portion of a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable, while supporting a session on specialty crops at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is allowable. • Funding an “XYZ State Grown” booth at a specialty crop-specific venue where all exhibitors in the booth are specialty crop producers is allowable, but funding an “XYZ Grown” booth at a non-specialty crop specific venue is not allowable. |
| Selling and Marketing Costs – Cookbooks, Cooking | <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of separate complementary non-specialty crop products. A separate complementary non-specialty crop product means a product closely</p> |

| Item | Description |
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| Demonstrations, Recipe Cards, Food Pairings | <p>associated with a specialty crop product, the purchase of one encouraging consumers to buy the other (i.e., cheese and wine).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs promoting the specialty crops in processed products (products prepared or created for the purposes of promoting a specialty crop but that require other ingredients are considered a processed product). A processed product is defined as a product that consists of more than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.</p> |
| Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices | <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies must be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs. Only materials and supplies actually used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs.</p> <p>A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant or subapplicant for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. In the specific case of computing devices, charging as direct cost is allowable for devices that are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated, to the performance of a Federal award. Where Federally-donated or furnished materials are used in performing the Federal award, such materials will be used without charge.</p> |
| Training | <p><i>Allowable</i> when the training is required to meet the objectives of the project or program, including training that is related to Federal grants management.</p> |
| Travel – Domestic | <p><i>Allowable</i> when the training is required to meet the objectives of the project or program, including training that is related to Federal grants management.</p> |
| Travel – Government Officials | <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for government officials per 2 CFR § 200.444.</p> |
| Travel – Foreign | <p><i>Allowable.</i></p> <p>Foreign travel includes any travel outside the United States, and any United States territories and possessions. However, the term “foreign travel” for a U.S. governmental unit located in a foreign country means travel outside that country. Projects must provide justification for the travel. AMS recommends that recipient search the Foreign Agricultural Service database of GAIN reports (http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Pages/Default.aspx) to ensure that proposals will not duplicate information that already exists.</p> |

4.8 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.8.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/individual-registration.html>

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- 1) *Obtain a DUNS Number:* All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a [Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\) number](#) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form.
- 2) *Register with SAM:* In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**
- 3) *Create a Grants.gov Account:* The next step in the registration process is to [create an account with Grants.gov](#). Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, the EBiz POC will need to identify and assign an individual to the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role.
- 4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles:* After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and [authorize the appropriate roles](#), which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.
- 5) *Track Role Status:* After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you [to track your status](#).

b. *Electronic Signature:* When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as AORs. **This step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

4.8.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

On December 31, 2017, [Grants.gov officially retired the legacy PDF application package](#) as a method to apply for a federal grant. Applicants can now apply only using Grants.gov Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

- 1) *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

- a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: You may need to visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software.

- b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms*: Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 form information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting the application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the due date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in section 4.3 Content and Form of Application Submission are included.

- 4) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number that you and Grants.gov can refer to if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact mentioned in section 7.0 Agency Contacts.

4.8.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in section 4.4 Submission Date and Time. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When AMS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS.

AMS will not accept applications packages by fax, email, or postal mail. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS. See [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#).

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections. Applicants using slow internet connections, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting their application to Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

4.8.4 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all the instructions provided by AMS.
- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](#) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Size/ File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader).
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct DUNS number on the SF-424 cover page.
Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html> and FAQs:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

SCBGP will review grant applications to ensure the State Plan meets the statutory purpose of the program, all application criteria are fulfilled in accordance with section **4.0 Application and Submission Information**, and that costs are allowable.

The SCBGP team will notify the individual listed on the SF-424 form “Application for Federal Assistance” in block f. if additional information is required after the initial review of the application. Applicant should ensure that all sub-applicants are aware that additional information may be required from them because of the SCBGP review of their grant proposal. Failure to provide requested information in a timely manner may result in a project not receiving funding.

6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. The Grant Agreement Face Sheet (AMS-33) will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The Notice of Award and Grant Agreement will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.210](#) and a reference to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

6.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

All AMS grant agreements include the AMS General Terms and Conditions as part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement. More information is provided in the most recent version of the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) under the *Administrative and National Policy Requirements* section.

6.3 REPORTING

Recipients are required to submit interim reports (performance and financial) throughout the grant period of performance as well as one final report.

6.3.1 INTERIM REPORTS (PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL)

The Annual Performance Report, along with an annual SF-425 “Federal Financial Report”, is due within 90 calendar days after each one-year period of performance.

The 3-year period of performance begins September 30, 2018, and ends September 29, 2021. Recipients must submit two (2) interim reports.

| Annual Report Number | One-Year Marker (Report Due w/in 90 Days of this Date) | Due Date |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | September 30, 2019 | December 29, 2019 |
| 2 | September 30, 2020 | December 29, 2020 |

AWARD CLOSEOUT

To officially close out an award, recipients should submit the following items to AMS, as required in the most recent [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#). They are due within 90 days following the award performance period (no later than December 28, 2021):

1. Final Performance Report
2. Final Payment Request (form SF-270), if applicable
3. Final SF-425 form, “Federal Financial Report”, and if applicable, payment of unobligated balance
4. Tangible Personal Property Report, if applicable
5. Audit Report, if applicable
6. A refund of any unused grant funds (checks made out to Agricultural Marketing Service), if applicable

Once the project is successfully closed, AMS will issue a closeout letter as the Agency’s official notification. The timely closeout of your award helps ensure future grant application eligibility.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

7.1 TEAM LEAD

Ms. Carly Borgmeier

Phone: (202) 260-8702

E-Mail: CarlyM.Borgmeier@ams.usda.gov

7.2 GRANTS MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

Mr. Shawn Adolphus

Phone: (202) 260-8704

E-Mail: ShawnC.Adolphus@ams.usda.gov

Mr. John Hrivnak

Phone: (202) 260-8703

E-Mail: John.Hrivnak@ams.usda.gov

7.3 ADDRESS

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Stop 0267
Room 4534 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-0269
www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp

7.4 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#).

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 RELEASE OF APPLICATION INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) and the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)), as implemented by USDA's regulations ([7 CFR part 1, Subpart A](#)) govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 3943-S, Mail Stop 0202, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0273, Telephone: (202) 720-2498; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

8.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit the completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

8.3 PROHIBITION ON USING FUNDS UNDER GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES THAT REQUIRE CERTAIN INTERNAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does not require any of its employees, contractors, or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, or subrecipients from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information. Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in sections 743, 744 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Pub. L. 114-113, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions Government-wide) and any successor provisions of law on making funds available through grants and cooperative agreements to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and (2) section 744 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

8.4 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.