



# Specialty Crop Block Grant FY2019 Concept Proposal Instructions

For projects starting in early 2019 and ending no later than November 15, 2020

Concept Proposal Deadline: February 1, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Colorado Department of Agriculture  
305 Interlocken Parkway  
Broomfield, CO 80021  
Glenda Mostek  
303-869-9173  
[glenda.mostek@state.co.us](mailto:glenda.mostek@state.co.us)

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## **New This Year (2019)**

Letters of support are mandatory with each concept paper. Letters should be from the specialty crop industry, and should indicate how the project would make Colorado specialty crops more competitive. If industry supports multiple projects, stakeholders may be asked to rank the importance of projects.

Publication costs and out-of-state travel to present research at conferences and will not be funded.

Projects which do not demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment will not be submitted to the review team.

Scoring for previous performance: If the organization has previously received funding through the program, up to 20 points may be deducted by CDA if the recipient organization failed to provide invoices and reports in a timely manner or otherwise failed to properly administer the project in compliance with the requirements of the SCBGP.

## **Background**

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to partner with state departments of agriculture **to enhance the competitiveness of growers of fruits, vegetables, and other horticultural crops in areas such as marketing, promotion, education, research, trade and nutrition.** The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) will be accepting concept proposals beginning December 7, 2018 for projects to begin in the spring of 2020. Colorado's award by USDA this year is estimated to be approximately \$550,000. Applicants will be required to provide a cash and/or in-kind matching contribution of at least 25 percent of the total project budget.

### **Definition**

For the purposes of this program, specialty crops are defined as

- fruits and vegetables,
- tree nuts,
- dried fruits, and
- nursery crops (including floriculture and sod).

Crops **excluded** from the program as defined by USDA's AMS include: hemp, marijuana, cotton, cottonseed, feed crops (such as barley, corn, hay, oats, sorghum grain, and millet), flaxseed, food grains (such as quinoa, rice, rye, and wheat), livestock and dairy products (including eggs), marine aquaculture, oil crops (such as peanut, soybean, sunflower, safflower, rapeseed, canola, and mustard seed), peanuts, range grasses, sugar beets, sugarcane, and tobacco. A complete list of eligible crops is available on the USDA specialty crop block grant program (SCBGP) website at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>.

## **Eligibility**

Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and/or local organizations, academia and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply with projects lasting from approximately January 1, 2020 to November 1, 2021, either as single entities or in combined efforts.

**Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment. Projects may not solely benefit individuals. All projects must solely enhance the competitiveness of Colorado specialty crops.**

The following are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable projects:

Examples of **acceptable** projects

- A State requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which will be shared with many growers throughout the State during the project.
- A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
- A single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative to specialty crop stakeholders in a region that currently does not have one.
- A single non-profit organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their 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 method.

Example of **unacceptable** projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
- A State requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.
- A non-profit organization uses grant funds to purchase produce and then sells that produce to other entities at cost or a higher price than the purchase price while competing with other private companies who sell produce in the area,
- A sole proprietor requests grant funds to redesign her/his logo in order to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers' market.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase membership in the organization.

## **Project Priorities**

Funding from the SCBGP affords Colorado's specialty crops stakeholders an unprecedented opportunity to undertake **new** initiatives. **Projects which duplicate research which has already been conducted will be given lower priority.** Project priorities include, but are not limited to:

- enhancing food safety;
- investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;

- developing adaptation and mitigation strategies for farmers in drought-stricken regions of the country;
- supporting the growth of organic specialty crops;
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- pest and disease control;
- increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- increasing opportunities for new and beginning farmers;
- improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- protecting and improving pollinator health;
- developing local and regional food systems; and
- improving food access in underserved communities and among veterans.

## **Program Funding**

### **Availability**

Colorado estimates USDA will award the state an allocation of approximately \$550,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. Grant funds are available only for projects that support specialty crops grown in the State of Colorado and are intended to supplement (not replace) private, state, or third party participant funding.

### **Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions**

A matching contribution of cash and/or in-kind resources equal to *at least 25 percent* of the total project budget is required. Preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate applicant commitment to the project in terms of cash contribution and that maximize the leveraging of funds.

### **Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are fixed costs not directly accountable to the cost objectives and are not allowed for grant reimbursement.

### **Grant Restrictions and Limitations**

- For a complete list of allowable and unallowable costs and activities, visit the list from USDA at [www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant)
- Funds may not be used for indirect costs.
- Funds may not be used for publication costs and out-of-state travel to present research at conferences.
- Funds may not be utilized for paying down current debt or general administrative expenses (such as rent, phone, copiers, legal, etc.).
- Funds may not be utilized for capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings and land. Similarly, funds may not be utilized for purchasing equipment, and construction/building costs.
  - *General purpose equipment* means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities.
  - *Equipment* means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more.

- Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment **are** allowable as direct costs provided that that the items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more are to be used to solely benefit the competitiveness of specialty crops.
  - *Special purpose equipment* means equipment that is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. Contact Glenda Mostek at 303-869-9173 for prior approval for inclusion of special purpose equipment.
- Funds may not be used for development or participation in lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S. Code 1352.
- Funds may not be used to fund political activities pursuant to 5 U.S. Code 1501-1508.
- All proposals and reports submitted to the Department are subject to the Colorado Open Records Law.
- A complete list of terms and conditions from USDA is available on the Colorado Specialty Crops Web page.

### **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)**

SCBGP recipients must comply with the FFATA of 2006. This includes obtaining a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and maintaining a current registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> to obtain DUNS numbers. Additional information can be obtained at [www.fsr.gov/](http://www.fsr.gov/). DUNS information must be provided on the application to be considered for award.

## **Solicitation Process and Timeline**

### **Competitive Grant Application Review Process**

CDA's competitive solicitation process will be divided into two phases: Phase I, Concept Proposal and Phase II, Grant Proposal. Concept Proposal instructions are listed below. Projects with the highest combined scores will serve as recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture as to which applicants should be invited to complete a Grant Proposal. All applicants will be notified of their grant application status, and whether they have been selected to complete the Phase II, Grant Proposal application on or before April 15. Instructions and completion deadline for Phase II will be given at that time. All Grant Proposals must fully describe the project's purpose, potential impact, measurable outcomes, indicators, work plan, budget narrative, oversight, and commitment. An applicant's failure to meet eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in CDA's rejection of the award prior to or after the application review.

#### **Phase I, Concept Proposal**

Concept Proposals must use the Concept Proposal template and briefly describe the project in a clear, concise manner and be responsive to the categories identified in the Concept Proposal. CDA's Concept Proposal template, application instructions, and Technical Evaluation Criteria Score Sheet from which applications will be scored are accessible via CDA's web site at [www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant).

Once the Concept Proposals have been collected by CDA and the submission deadline has expired, CDA will determine whether the submitted Concept Proposals meet SCBGP grant eligibility requirements and will assess all applicants' past grant performances (if any). An SCBGP Review Panel will then be formed, which will likely be comprised of representatives from public agencies and non-profit entities with an interest and expertise in specialty crop food and agricultural systems. The Panel will rank

proposals against the evaluation criteria and questions listed on the Technical Evaluation Criteria Score Sheet. Depending on the nature of the Concept Proposals, the Panel may seek additional peer review for more specialized proposals.

**Phase II, Grant Proposal**

The Panel will make recommendations to the Department of Agriculture as to which applicants should be invited to submit a Phase II, Grant Proposal, which will be included in CDA’s FY 2019 SCBGP State Plan. The Department will ultimately decide which projects will be invited to Phase II.

**Concept Proposal Submission Instructions**

Interested applicants can apply by completing the Colorado SCBGP Concept Proposal application, which is accessible via CDA’s web site at [www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant](http://www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant).

All Concept Proposals must be emailed to [glenda.mostek@state.co.us](mailto:glenda.mostek@state.co.us) on or before 5:00 p.m., February 1, 2019, with letter(s) of support. **Proposals must be saved as a Microsoft Word .docx file type extension. Letters of support may be in the .pdf format.**

**Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged via email, if you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact Glenda Mostek at 303-869-9173 to ensure your proposal was received.**

Questions regarding this grant and/or the competitive solicitation process should be directed to CDA at 303-869-9173 or [glenda.mostek@state.co.us](mailto:glenda.mostek@state.co.us).

| <b>Phase I: Concept Proposal</b>                     |   |
|--|---|
| Request for concept proposals                        | December 2018                             |
| Concept proposals due                                | February 1, 2019, 5:00 p.m. MT            |
| <b>Phase II: Grant Proposal (by invitation only)</b> |   |
| Invitation to submit grant proposals                 | On or about April 15, 2019                |
| Phase II grant proposals due                         | May 10, 2019                              |
| Grant proposals sent to USDA for approval            | June 2019                                 |
| <b>Award</b>   |   |
| Announcement of award funding                        | October 2019                              |
| Contracting with CDA                                 | October 2019-January 2020                 |
| Project start  | January 1, 2020 or when contract executed |
| Project end date                                     | No later than November 15, 2021           |

CDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, as well as increase or decrease the amount of requested funding based on findings and the level of available funds. Should the proposal review process suggest a funding level less than the amount requested, our staff will confer with the applicant to determine whether the amount recommended would significantly impact the project's overall feasibility. Prior funding of a project by the Department should not be considered precedent for funding of an apparently similar project. Each applicant will be notified of the Department's decision with respect to their proposal(s).

All proposals submitted to the Department are subject to the Colorado Open Records Law.

**Expected Measurable Outcomes and Indicators**

**Each project submitted must include at least one of the eight outcomes listed below, and at least one of the indicators listed underneath the selected outcome(s).** If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, select at least one.

If the indicator(s) below the selected outcome(s) are not relevant to a project, a project specific indicator(s) may be developed which will be subject to approval by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

**Applicants must clearly explain how they will collect the required data to report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s).** The progress of each indicator must be reported in the Annual Performance Report and the result in the Final Performance Report.

AMS will aggregate the data collected to assess the overall impact of the program and report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congress on these national outcome measures.

AMS will review the quality of the information received in subsequent performance reports and modify the outcomes and indicators as needed over time to lead to better results in showing the impact of the SCBGP.

**Outcome Measures and Indicators:**

**OUTCOME 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales  
**(required for all marketing and promotion projects)**

Indicator:

1. Sales increased from \$\_\_\_\_\_ to \$\_\_\_\_ and by \_\_\_\_\_ percent, as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities.

*Please note that there is only one indicator for Outcome 1.*

Marketing and promotion projects focus efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, and generate publicity, attract new customers, or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue. These include, but are not limited to:

- Uses of social media to market and promote;
- Specialty crop local, regional and national campaigns;
- Specialty crop only tradeshow;
- Website promotion and development;
- Use/development of billboards, radio, television, magazine and email ads,
- Marketing materials such as direct mail, brochures;
- Agritourism; and
- Export market development.

It is **MANDATORY** for all marketing and promotion projects that the specific measure is expressed as a dollar value and percentage increase in sales of one or more specialty crops in one or more states or foreign markets as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities. For example, an expected outcome of growth in sales from 5% to 10% is not acceptable by itself, but in combination with an increase in sales of \$1 million to \$2 million it is acceptable. This requirement means that an established baseline of sales in

dollars must already exist at the time of application. For projects that do not already have a baseline of sales in dollars, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine such a baseline in order to meet the requirement to document the value of sales increases by the end of the project.

**Example for Outcome 1:**

**Outcome 1, Indicator 1.**

Sales increased from \$1 million to \$2 million and by 100 percent, as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities.

**OUTCOME 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption.

**Indicators:**

1. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of children and youth reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
  
2. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of adults reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
  
3. Number of new and improved technologies and processes to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of specialty crops (excluding patents) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Number of new specialty crops and/or specialty crop products introduced to consumers \_\_\_\_\_

**Example for Outcome 2:**

**Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a.**

Of the 150 total number of children and youth reached, 132 will gain knowledge about eating more specialty crops

**OUTCOME 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access and awareness.

**Indicators:**

1. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of consumers or wholesale buyers reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/preserved/obtained/prepared
  
2. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of individuals (culinary professionals, institutional kitchens, specialty crop entrepreneurs such as kitchen incubators/shared-use kitchens, etc.) reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/prepared/preserved/obtained

3. Number of existing delivery systems/access points of those reached that expanded and/or improved offerings of specialty crops
  - a. farmers' markets
  - b. produce at corner stores
  - c. school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events, etc.)
  - d. grocery stores
  - e. wholesale markets
  - f. food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
  - g. home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
  - h. lawn and garden centers
  - i. other systems/access points, not noted
  - j. total (if not reported above)
  
4. Number of new delivery systems/access points offering specialty crops
  - a. farmers' markets
  - b. produce at corner stores
  - c. school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events, etc.)
  - d. grocery stores
  - e. wholesale markets
  - f. food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
  - g. home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
  - h. lawn and garden centers
  - i. other systems/access points, not noted
  - j. total (if not reported above)

**OUTCOME 4:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources.

**Indicators:**

1. Numbers of plant/seed releases (i.e., cultivars, drought-tolerant plants, organic, enhanced nutritional composition, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Adoption of best practices and technologies resulting in increased yields, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and conservation of resources (select at least one below).
  - a. Number of growers/producers indicating adoption of recommended practices \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Number of growers/producers reporting reduction in pesticides, fertilizer, water used/acre \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of producers reporting increased dollar returns per acre or reduced costs per acre \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Number of acres in conservation tillage or acres in other best management practices \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Number of habitat acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators and specialty crops \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOME 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems.

**Indicators:**

1. Number of new or improved innovation models (biological, economic, business, management, etc.), technologies, networks, products, processes, etc. developed for specialty crop entities including producers, processors, distributors, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of innovations adopted \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of specialty crop growers/producers (and other members of the specialty crop supply chain) that have increased revenue expressed in dollars \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of new diagnostic systems analyzing specialty crop pests and disease \_\_\_\_\_  
[Diagnostic systems refer to, among other things: labs, networks, procedures, access points]
5. Number of new diagnostic technologies available for detecting plant pests and diseases. \_\_\_\_\_  
[The intent here is not to count individual pieces of equipment or devices, but to enumerate technologies that add to the diagnostic capacity]
6. Number of first responders trained in early detection and rapid response to combat plant pests and diseases \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of viable technologies/processes developed or modified that will increase specialty crop distribution and/or production \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of growers/producers that gained knowledge about science-based tools through outreach and education programs \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOME 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety.

**Indicators:**

1. Number of viable technologies developed or modified for the detection and characterization of specialty crop supply contamination from foodborne threats \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of viable prevention, control and intervention strategies for all specialty crop production scales for foodborne threats along the production continuum \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of individuals who learn about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices and number of those individuals who increase their food safety skills and knowledge
4. Number of improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention technologies \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of reported changes in prevention, detection, control, and intervention strategies \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOME 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources.

**Indicators:**

Number of projects focused on:

1. Increased understanding of fecal indicators and pathogens \_\_\_\_\_

2. Increased safety of all inputs into the specialty crop chain \_\_\_\_\_
3. Increased understanding of the roles of humans, plants and animals as vectors \_\_\_\_\_
4. Increased understanding of preharvest and postharvest process impacts on microbial and chemical threats \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of growers or producers obtaining on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices) \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOME 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development.

Indicators:

1. Number of new rural careers created \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of new urban careers created \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of jobs maintained/created \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of small businesses maintained/created \_\_\_\_\_
5. Increased revenue/increased savings/one-time capital purchases (in dollars)\_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of new beginning farmers who went into specialty crop production \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of socially disadvantaged famers who went into specialty crop production \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information:

Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers.

## **Concept Proposal Questions, Scoring, and Review Criteria**

Applicants must respond to the following questions in the Concept Proposal. Failure to fully complete the Concept Proposal will result in disqualification.

### **Organization/Business Name (not a scored question):**

Legal name of the organization that will be the lead applicant, serve as lead for the project, and will receive grant funds.

### **Organization/Business Type (not a scored question):**

Select the organization type that best describes the applicant.

### **Address/Phone Number/Email Address (not a scored question):**

Enter the organization's mailing address, phone number, and email address.

**DUNS Number (not a scored question):**

List the applicant’s Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. Instructions on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at [https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/duns\\_num\\_guide.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/duns_num_guide.pdf). **There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number.** If you do not know if you have a DUNS number, you can check at <https://www.sam.gov>. Your DUNS number must be “active” on <https://www.sam.gov> and must be publicly searchable. DUNS numbers require a yearly renewal on <https://www.sam.gov> and must be renewed for the entire grant period.

**Federal Tax ID Number (not a scored question):**

Enter the applicant’s Federal Tax Identification Number.

**Project Title (not a scored question):**

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less.

**Requested Grant Amount (not a scored question):**

Enter the total amount of SCBGP funds requested for the project. The number must match the amount listed in the Projected Budget.

**Project Coordinator (not a scored question):**

Name of the individual overseeing the project.

**Specialty Crop(s) to be used/studied/promoted (not a scored question)::**

Which Colorado specialty crops will the project focus on?

**History (will be scored as part of project plan):**

Has the organization previously received grant funds through the Colorado Department of Agriculture, or through other organizations?

**Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher (not a scored question)?** Indicate whether the applicant is a Beginning Farmer or Rancher or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, and whether the project will benefit Beginning Farmers or Ranchers or Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. A Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than ten (10) years and substantially participates in the operation. A Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher means 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.

**Expected Measurable Outcomes (will be scored as part of Project Plan):**

Proposals must result in at least one of the eight outcomes as predetermined by USDA. Identify the outcome measure(s) the project will achieve and the indicator of success for each outcome. Outcomes are measurable changes in behavior or conditions that reflect a positive impact to the specialty crop industry. Refer to the Outcome Measures listed on pages 8-12 of this document for additional information on the required outcomes.

**Outcome Indicators (will be scored as part of Project Plan):**

Provide at least one indicator for each outcome and the related quantifiable results.

Refer to the Outcome Indicators listed on pages 8-12 of this document for additional information on the required indicators.

**Project Purpose (30 points):**

Using 600 words or less, identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address, and explain why the proposal is important and timely for the specialty crop industry. If the project builds upon a prior-year project, describe how the project differs from, complements, or builds upon the previous work. **Projects which duplicate research which has previously been conducted will be given lower priority.**

*Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal states the specific issue, problem, or need the project will address, the timeliness and relevance to the specialty crop industry, if it will provide a direct benefit to the specialty crop industry, the number of potential beneficiaries, and if the approach is rational and sound.*

**Duration of Project (not a scored question):**

All projects will begin on approximately January 1, 2020 (or when contracting with CDA is completed), and end November 15, 2021. There is no penalty if projects end prior to November 2021.

**Project Plan (30 points):**

Using 600 words or less, explain how the data will be collected and how the project will accomplish the outcomes measure(s) and indicator(s) selected.

*Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based upon how the data will be collected and how well the project will accomplish the outcomes(s) and indicator(s) selected; are the outcomes and indicators appropriate for the project and do they contribute to the competitiveness of Colorado specialty crops.*

**Projected Budget (15 points):**

Complete the budget template. All budget items should solely support enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops and correlate to the purpose of the project. In the “Explanation” area, go into some detail as to how the funds will be spent – salary, types of supplies or equipment needed, etc.

Complete each budget category by entering the amount of grant funds budgeted for each category. Failure to complete the required budget template may result in disqualification.

Under Cash Match and In-Kind Match, enter the total amount of matching funds and/or in-kind contributions committed to this project from other sources. Under the Total column and row, enter the sum of funds requested, plus match.

Matching funds of at least 25% are required for the Colorado SCBGP.

*Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the budget is reasonable and consistent with the project’s purpose, outcome(s), and indicator(s). Are matching funds or in-kind contributions included in the correct amount? How much of the match is cash versus in-kind? Is it feasible that the proposed work can be accomplished given the proposed budget?*

**Personnel:** Estimate the salary and wage costs for individuals employed by the applicant organization that will receive grant funding. Salary and wage costs must only be those that are directly applicable to the project being proposed. Salary and wage costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual.

**Fringe Benefits:** Estimate the total fringe benefit costs for the project participants. Fringe benefit costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual.

**Travel:** Calculate the costs for the travel by taking into account destinations, number of trips, days traveling, transportation costs, estimated lodging and meal costs, and estimated mileage rate. Travel costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual. Travel costs must conform with GSA Travel rates: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. Travel funds may not be used to attend out-of-state conferences to present results.

**Special Purpose Equipment:** Estimate the costs for any special purpose equipment to be purchased. Special purpose equipment is an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 to be used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. Within the description column, indicate the type of special purpose equipment to be purchased. If purchasing or renting equipment, identify the item and its value. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable. If the cost is under \$5,000, then include these items under Supplies. Special purpose equipment must be pre-approved, contact Glenda.mostek@state.co.us.

**Supplies:** Estimate the costs for supplies to be purchased. Supplies are items with an acquisition cost of less than \$5,000 per unit that are used exclusively for the objectives of the project. Within the description column, provide a brief explanation of the types of supplies needed for the project. General use office supplies (paper, printer ink, pens, etc.) are considered indirect costs under the SCBGP.

**Contractual:** Estimate the costs for any work on the project that will be performed by individuals not employed by the applicant organization (e.g. consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.).

**Other:** Estimate all other costs for each year of the project such as conferences or meetings, speaker/trainer fees, publication costs, data collection, and other budgeted costs associated with the project. Funds may not be used for publication costs in professional journals.

**Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs are not allowed on the Colorado SCBGP.

**Program Income:** Estimate the amount of income (if any) that may be generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award. Within the description column, explain how program income may be generated. Program income cannot be used as profit for an organization and must be reinvested back into the project. Explain how the program income will be used in the project.

**External Support (25 points):**

Letters of support are mandatory with each concept paper. At least one and up to five letters of support may be included. Letters should include a contact email and phone number. Letters should be from the specialty crop industry, and should indicate how the project would make Colorado specialty crops more competitive. If industry supports multiple projects, stakeholders may be asked to rank the importance of projects.

**Total number of points in the Concept Proposal: 100 Points.**

## **Requirements and Limitations**

### **Reimbursement Basis**

Funds will be released to the applicant through the reimbursement of documented expenses incurred after the contract effective date. Reimbursement of expenses will be contingent upon compliance with Program guidelines as set forth by CDA. Claims for reimbursement may not be made more often than monthly.

### **Insurance**

If your project is selected, you must provide proof of insurance to be a vendor for the State of Colorado. Proof of insurance is required for general liability (\$1,000,000), automobile liability (\$1,000,000), and worker's compensation coverage (no set amount).

### **Federal Cost Principles**

Federal cost principles are regulations based on organization type used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. Applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost principles appropriate to their organization and consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds, and ensuring contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principle requirements.

- State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to 2 CFR 200.
- For-profit organizations will be subject to 48 CFR Subpart 31.2.

### **Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are not allowable for the Colorado SCBGP but may be used for matching funds.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project, 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 that is necessary for the project, and equipment and supplies used solely for the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Below are typical indirect costs for specific types of organizations. The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate where all of the following conditions are met:

- Administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
- Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency; and
- The costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

The following are considered indirect and should not be included in the Projected Budget as direct costs:

- Information Technology services;
- Rent;
- Utilities and internet service;
- Telephone service (mobile and land-line);
- General office supplies; and
- Insurance.

## **Disqualifications**

The following will result in the disqualification of a project proposal:

- Proposals from applicants with an active exclusion on the federal System for Award Management (SAM). Visit [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) for additional information to register your organization or to verify the status of your organization;
- Incomplete proposals, including proposals with one or more unanswered question and/or missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments;
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration; and
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project.

## **Review and Notification**

### Review Criteria

CDA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Colorado specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent. Applicants' Concept Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria set forth in the Concept Proposal Questions, Scoring, and Review Criteria section of this document.

### **Review Process**

CDA will conduct two levels of review during the Concept Proposal process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether Concept Proposal requirements are met and will assess applicants' past CDA grant performances (if any). The second level is a technical review to evaluate the merits of the Concept Proposals. The CDA SCBGP Review Panel will perform the technical review. This panel is comprised of growers and representatives from public agencies and non-profit entities with an interest and expertise in specialty crop food and agricultural systems. The Panel will rank proposals against the evaluation criteria and questions listed on the Technical Evaluation Criteria Score Sheet.

CDA may contact applicants for purposes of clarifying information contained in the proposal or to address questions about the proposed project.

### **Notification and Feedback**

Projects that are disqualified utilizing the criteria above and those not invited to Phase II will be notified. Successful applicants will be invited to Phase II and will receive instructions for submitting a Grant

Proposal. Applicants not invited to participate in Phase II may contact CDA and request feedback on their Concept Proposals.

### **Assistance and Questions**

Questions regarding this grant and/or the competitive solicitation process should be directed to Glenda Mostek at CDA at 303-869-8173 or [glenda.mostek@state.co.us](mailto:glenda.mostek@state.co.us).

### **Conflict of Interest**

In order to provide fair and equitable treatment in the application review process, CDA requires every Review Panel member to sign a 'Non-conflict of Interest' form. This form ensures that all members have no professional interest in the applications they are reviewing.

### **Grant Award Guidelines**

- The USDA is the funding entity and has the final approval for projects submitted. Although CDA and a review panel will make the initial review and award recommendations to the USDA, the USDA will make the final decision concerning grant awards. However, CDA will notify you of the status of your proposal.
- No grant funds may be expended until USDA has approved the state's recommended projects and the contract process is complete between CDA and the organization receiving the grant. This process may take until January 1, 2020 to complete after awards have been announced. Projects may start sooner if contracting is completed sooner.
- Grants will be made in support of specialty crops grown in the State of Colorado and are intended to supplement private, state, or third party participant funding.
- A matching contribution of cash and/or in-kind resources equal to at least 25 percent of the total project budget is required. Other federal grant funds may NOT be used as matching funds.

### **Post-Award Requirements**

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contract with the state. The contract will establish an approved project statement of work and budget, and will list responsibilities of project personnel. The statement of work will be the guiding document in terms of requirements for management of the grant. For project planning purposes, the applicant should not plan to start the project before January 1, 2020.

Applicants will be required to show proof of insurance (liability, auto and workers compensation) prior to contracting.

In general, the Program will operate on a cost reimbursement basis with payments made to the applicant upon submission of claims for reimbursement form, invoice and documentation supporting eligible project expenses. Expenditures will not be reimbursed without proof of payment. Copies of one of the following are required as proof of payment(s): cancelled checks, wire transfer confirmations, bank statements, credit card statements, signed receipts, debit notes, or other documentation as approved by the CDA. Receipts for media buys shall include details on dates, locations and placements of commercials, billboards, etc.

Successful applicants will also be required to develop and submit monthly, as well as interim and final reports as agreed between the CDA and the applicant necessary to document project progress and final results. The specific details of these reports will be specified in the above mentioned contract. In addition to the interim and final reports, the CDA will reserve the right to conduct a follow-up survey(s) of funded projects to determine long-term economic impacts.

CDA will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any applicant for work performed in the preparation of and/or production of an application or for any work performed prior to the effective date of the contract.

CDA reserves the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to project performance during and up to three years following the project's completion and to pursue any and all legal remedies to recover funds in the event of non-compliance or misrepresentation.

Additionally, CDA reserves the right to:

- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and applicant's agreement;
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the application requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to better serve the interests of the State of Colorado; and
- Amend the program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.

## **Civil Rights:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (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). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) 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 your 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)