



Missouri Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program General Information

The Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for funding through U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) for the 2025 fiscal year (FY).

The 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 to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by—

- (1) Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
- (2) Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
- (3) Expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and
- (4) Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.
- (5) For such other purposes determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with specialty crop stakeholders and relevant State departments of agriculture.

Each project must identify one expected measurable outcome and indicator that specifically demonstrates the projects impact on enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.

Submission Deadline: **Wednesday July 2, 2025 - 3 p.m.**

Files to Submit: **#1 – MDA SCBGP Application Part 1**
#2 – USDA SCBGP Application Part 2

Submit to: Susan Bennett, SCBGP Program Coordinator
Susan.Bennett@mda.mo.gov
Phone: (573) 526-9548
1616 Missouri Blvd.
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Eligibility Information

Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). View a list of eligible and ineligible commodities and the definition of the word “crop” at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>.

Applications for grant funds should show how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public, rather than a single organization, institution or individual. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that solely provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual. Applications will be accepted from individuals, individual producers, non-profit and for-profit businesses, public and private colleges and universities, agencies, institutions, industry and community-based organizations or

commercial entities **only** if the project is focused on research, education, demonstration or benefit the entire specialty crop industry. Projects must have strong information dissemination and outreach components where the shared results benefit others as well. Single organizations, institutions and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Project types for 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 ([21 U.S.C. Chapter 27](#)). For example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices,” “Good Handling Practices,” “Good Manufacturing Practices,” and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA Group GAP) 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

Projects more relevant to 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 [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#).

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 \(FMPP\)](#), [Local Food Promotion Program \(LFPP\)](#), and [Regional Food System Partnerships \(RFSP\)](#) 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 <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.

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 single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative for specialty crop stakeholders in the region, which currently does not have one.

A single specialty crop organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.

A single farmer erects high tunnels on their 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.

A university requests grant funds to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.

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.

Individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands requesting funds to promote their individual businesses.

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 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 single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase its membership.

Projects where one organization specifically attempts to disparage the mission, goals and/or actions of another organization are unallowable.

Application

The 2025 MDA application has two parts. Both files must be completed and submitted by the due date.

- #1 – MDA SCBGP Application Part 1
- #2 – USDA SCBGP Application Part 2

Please refer to all the reference files on our web page to assist you in completion. USDA has provided an example quick guide for the file named #2 – USDA SCBGP Application Part 2. Please review for further guidance.

Eligible Applicants

Individuals, individual producers, non-profit and for-profit businesses, public and private colleges

and universities, agencies, institutions, industry and community-based organizations or commercial entities **only** if the project is focused on research, education, demonstration or benefit the entire specialty crop industry.

Personnel

Maximum total for Personnel and Fringe Benefits combined is \$15,000 for the entire project.

External Support

One to two support letters are encouraged for review to the MDA advisory committee review. These letters should be attached with your application submittal email.

Expected Measurable Outcomes

Each project submitted must include at least one of the predetermined outcomes and indicators as defined by USDA. The 2025 SCBGP Measurable Outcomes and Quick Guide provides the details of each measureable outcome and indicators. These USDA documents should provide clarity for choosing at least **one measurable outcome and one indicator for a project**.

Applicants must clearly explain how they will collect the required data to report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s).

Outreach

Projects should include an outreach component addressing how project results, research findings, and conclusions will be extended to specialty crop growers and industry.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are **unallowable** under Missouri’s grant program.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

In-Eligible Uses of Funds

- Permanent infrastructure development or improvement (equipment, land, or buildings).
- Overhead expenses and indirect costs associated with a project.
- Lobbying or political efforts.
- Business entertainment or gifts.

In-State Travel Requirements through December 31, 2025

- Mileage – 65.5 cents per mile
<https://acct.oa.mo.gov/state-employees/travel-portal/mileage>
- Motel – use applicable GSA CONUS lodging rates per night (depending on location)
<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- Meals – use applicable state rates per day in state and out of state (depending on location)
<https://acct.oa.mo.gov/state-employees/travel-portal/meals-per-diem>

Grant Terms

The project grant period begins the date (November 2025) both parties sign the agreement and extends up to 24 months. Grant periods extending beyond 24 months will need approval by the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

Cost share and matching funds are not required by the SCBGP and should not be included in the application.

Reporting

All grantees are required to submit written performance reports annually to MDA detailing the project status and how grant monies were used for the performance reporting period. Upon completion of the project, a final, comprehensive report is due. Reporting requirements and templates will be detailed in the award agreement. First time SCBGP Grantees are required to submit written performance reports quarterly.

MDA must report each action that obligates \$30,000 or more in SCBGP funds for a grant to an entity, which is defined in [2 CFR Part 25, subpart C](#), to <https://sam.gov/fsrs> in accordance with the FFATA.

Reimbursements

This is a reimbursement grant only. Approved expenses will be reimbursed with supporting documentation for purchases and proof of payment.

Funded projects are eligible to receive grant funds on a quarterly reimbursement schedule. No advance payments will be made. Final reimbursements will not be processed until a completed final performance report is received by MDA.

Project Selection Process

MDA has selected an advisory committee to review applications and make recommendations for funding. The program coordinator and grant administrator receive recommendations and perform technical reviews for eligibility. The grant administrator submits eligible projects to the Missouri Department of Agriculture director for approval to include in the Missouri State Plan. Funding allocations are based on the quality of application as recommended during grant selection by the advisory committee.

Criteria for Selection

- Project has clear identifiable goals and demonstrates tangible benefits for the industry segment and for Missouri's overall food and agriculture economy.
- Project increases the sales of Missouri grown or manufactured food and agriculture products, including:
 - Increasing the volume of products sold.
 - Increasing the price of product sold.
 - Increasing the market share of products sold.
- Project has clear criteria by which to evaluate the success of the project. Goals and expected outcomes are verifiable, measurable and realistic for the scope of the project.

- Project has a high probability of achieving its goals.
- Project has strong industry support with support letters.
- Project includes an outreach component addressing how project results, research findings, and conclusions will be extended to specialty crop growers and industry.
- The size of the industry will be taken into consideration. For example, a \$10,000 increase in sales could have a more significant impact in a smaller industry than a larger one.
- Project addresses a challenge or opportunity, fits into the overall marketing plan of the industry sector, and adds to its overall marketing strategy.

Grant Administration

The Uniform Guidance [2 CFR 200](#) applies to all SCBGP awards. Grantees are required to meet the standards and requirements for financial management systems set forth or referenced in [2 CFR 200.302](#). The adequacy of your financial management system is integral to your ability to account for grant expenditures and track grant resources. You must use Federal funds in a responsible manner and apply adequate internal controls and cash management practices consistent with the requirements outlined in [2 CFR 200.303](#).

Monitoring

MDA reserves the right to perform site-monitoring visits to all grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required period and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately.

Grantees agree to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, regulations, rules, and orders. The grant will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Missouri.

Grantees will be accountable for all grant funds awarded. Grantees shall maintain records, receipts, accounting procedures and practices sufficient to reflect all costs claimed to have been incurred for the performance of the grant agreement. Interim and final reports shall document all grant expenditures.

Records Requirement

The grantee will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with MDA, receipts, invoices and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records. Financial records, statistical records, supporting documents, and other records relevant to the award shall be retained until June 30, 2034.

General Compliance

All awarded grant projects must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award.

MDA Reserves the Right To

- Reject any or all applications received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and agreement of applicant.
- Provide partial funding for specific application components that may be less than the formal amount requested in the grant application.
- Require a good faith effort from the project organization or sponsor to work with MDA subsequent to project completion to develop reporting data or implement the project results, where applicable.
- Withhold any payments that do not meet grant conditions.
- Require return or refund of grant monies used for expenditures that are not allowed or unauthorized.

Contact Information

For questions regarding the application, contact Susan Bennett at (573) 526-9548.
Method of submittal is by email to Susan.Bennett@mda.mo.gov

**Missouri Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
2025-Reviewer's Evaluation Criteria and Written Score Sheet - Project No.**

Criteria	Score Range	Points Earned
Project Purpose: Does this project "Enhance the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops"? Will the project provide a direct benefit to Missouri's specialty crop industry? Is the need of the project clearly communicated and convincing? Is the project eligible and feasible based on information provided?	5 5 5 5	
Potential Impact: Does this project directly benefit Missouri specialty crop production and/or sales? Is there sufficient outreach that will benefit the industry? Does it demonstrate collaborative and partnering benefits which can be replicated? How many years for the project to directly benefit the specialty crop industry?	5 5 5 1-5 years = 5pts 5+ years = 2 pts	
Measurable Outcomes: Is there at least one measurable, quantifiable outcome/indicator that will benefit the specialty crop industry in Missouri? Is data collection explained and is the method of measure reliable and sound? Are the outcomes of the project worth the total investment?	5 5 5	
Continuing Previously Funded Projects: Is the project likely to become self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent upon publicly and privately granted funds?	5	
Applicant's Past Performance Were the applicant's past performance and financial reports submitted in a timely manner, contained the required information, and obligated funds spent appropriately? (First time applicants receive full score of 5 for this question.)	5	
Budget: Is the budget financially realistic and reasonable? Are the budget items clearly outlined and justified? Are all expenses considered to complete the project?	5 5 5	
Work Plan: Do the activities relate to the objectives and measurable outcomes? Do the described tasks seem reasonable, well-thought-out, and feasible given the timeline and budget?	5 5	
Project Commitment: Is there industry support for the project and does the project partner with other organizations/institutions?	5	
Funding Priority: Does the application meet one of the project types listed on reverse side?	5	
Reviewer Name: _____ Date _____ TOTAL	100	

Comments:

**Missouri Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
2025 Reviewer's Evaluation Criteria and Written Score Sheet – Page 2**

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- 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

Additional Comments: