



Missouri Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program General Information

The Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for funding through the 2024 U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP).

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.

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: **Tuesday, March 26, 2024 - 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 <http://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

USDA promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands and rural communities. AMS encourages applicants to consider including goals and activities related to reducing and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or adapting to the already occurring climate change in their project’s design and implementation.

Projects more relevant to 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 [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 2024 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 of the reference files on our web page to assist you in completion.

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 2024 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, 2024

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

Grant Terms

The project grant period begins the date (November 2024) 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. Also, 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 <http://www.fsrs.gov> 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.

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, 2033.

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.

Equal Opportunity

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). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, 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 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
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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

Freedom of Information Act Requests - 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 § 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.

Prohibition on Using Funds under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements - By submission of its 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 section 743 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, 5 U.S.C. § 5303 note, 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.

Delinquency on Federal Debt - Any organization or individual that is indebted to the United States, and has a judgment lien filed against it for a debt to the United States, is ineligible to receive a federal grant. Applicants are required to indicate in their applications (on the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance”) if they are delinquent on any federal debt. If the applicant discloses a delinquency, the SCBGP may not award the grant until the debt is satisfied or satisfactory arrangements are made with the agency to which the debt is owed.

Anyone who has been judged to be in default on a federal debt and who has had a judgment lien filed against him or her should not be listed as a participant in an application for a SCBGP grant until the judgment is paid in full or is otherwise satisfied. No funds may be re-budgeted following an award to pay such an individual. The federal agency will disallow costs charged to awards that provide funds to individuals in violation of this requirement.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

By signing the award agreement, recipients agree to comply with the applicable Federal statutes and regulations as listed below and any other policy requirements that apply to USDA programs and awards. The full text of Code Federal Regulations references can be found at: [eCFR-Code of Federal Regulations](#).

Federal statutes and regulations found on the SF-424B “Assurances –Non-Construction Programs.”

[2 CFR § 25](#) – *System for Award Management and Universal Identifier Requirements*

[2 CFR § 170](#) – *Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information*

[2 CFR § 175](#) – *Award Term for Trafficking in Persons*

[2 CFR §§ 180](#) and [417](#) – *OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-Wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and USDA Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension*

[2 CFR § 182](#) – *Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)*

[2 CFR § 183](#) – *Never Contract with the Enemy*

[2 CFR § 184](#) – *Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects (see also “Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects” below)*

[2 CFR § 200](#) – *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for*

Federal Awards [2 CFR § 400](#) – *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit*

Requirements for Federal Awards [2 CFR § 415](#) – *General Program Administrative Regulations*

[2 CFR § 416](#) – General Program Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments

[2 CFR § 418](#) – *New Restrictions on Lobbying*

[2 CFR § 421](#) – *Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)*

[2 CFR § 422](#) – *Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct*

[7 CFR § 1, subpart A](#) – *Official Records (Freedom of Information Act)*

[7 CFR § 1\(b\)](#) – *National Environmental Policy Act*

[7 CFR § 3](#) – *Debt Management (OMB Circular No. A-129)*

[7 CFR § 15, subpart A](#) – *Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Agriculture—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*

[7 CFR § 331](#) and [9 CFR § 121](#)—*USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002*

[37 CFR § 401](#) – Rights to Inventions made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms under Government Grants, Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements

[41 CFR §§ 301-10.131 to 301-10.143](#) – *Use of United States Flag Air Carriers, which implements the Fly America Act* (49 U.S.C. 40118). For more information see

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191>. [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#) – *Contracts with Commercial Organizations*

[8 U.S.C. § 1324a](#) – *Unlawful employment of aliens*

[29 U.S.C. § 794](#) – *Nondiscrimination under Federal grants and programs*

[41 U.S.C. § 22](#) – *Interest of Member of Congress*

[41 U.S.C. § 4712](#) – *Enhancement of contractor protection from reprisal for disclosure of certain information*

44 U.S.C. § 3551 et seq. ([P.L. 107-347](#)) – *Federal Information System Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA)*

[EO 13166](#), *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to programs in accordance with [LEP Implementation Strategy for AMS' Federally-Assisted Programs](#).

[EO 13798](#), *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty*. As a recipient you must not discriminate against sub recipients on the basis of their religious character.

[EO 13864](#), *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities*

[EO 13933](#), *Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence*

[EO 13988](#), Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

[EO 13991](#), *Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring*

Mask-Wearing [EO 13999](#), *Protecting Worker Health and Safety*

[EO 14005](#), Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers

[DR 1020-006](#) – *Public Access*

[DR 1074-001](#) – *Scientific Integrity*

[DR 3465-001](#) – *Geospatial Data*

Motor Vehicle Safety – *Highway Safety Act of 1966*, as amended ([23 U.S.C. §§ 402 & 403](#)); *Government Organization and Employees Act*, as amended ([5 U.S.C. § 7902 \(c\)](#)); *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970*, as amended ([29 U.S.C. § 668](#)); *Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949*, as amended ([40 U.S.C. § 101, et seq.](#)); *Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States* ([EO 13043](#)); *Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving* ([EO 13513](#))

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012,

[P.L. No. 112-55](#), Division A, Sections 738 and 739 regarding corporate felony convictions and corporate Federal tax delinquencies.

[P.L. 117-58 §§ 70901-52](#)- Build America, Buy America Act

[P. L. 113-101](#) – Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 [P. L. 109-282](#) – Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006

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
2024-Reviewer's Evaluation Criteria and Written Score Sheet - Project No.**

Criteria	Score Range	Points Earned
Project Purpose: Is the need of the project clearly communicated and convincing? Is the project eligible and feasible based on information provided? Will the project provide a direct benefit to Missouri's specialty crop industry?	 5 5 10	
Potential Impact: Will the benefits of the project have a direct impact on Missouri producers, agribusinesses and organizations from specialty agricultural products, markets or value-added opportunities? Does this project "Enhance the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops"? Does it demonstrate collaborative and partnering benefits which can be replicated? Does this project directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers or beginning farmers?	 5 5 5 5	
Measurable Outcomes: Is there at least one measurable, quantifiable outcome that will benefit the specialty crop industry in Missouri? Are at least one of the predetermined indicators listed under each of outcome measure(s) chosen? 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 5	
Work Plan: Do the described tasks seem reasonable, well-thought-out, and feasible given the timeline and budget? Do the activities relate to the objectives and measurable outcomes? Is there sufficient outreach that will benefit the industry?	 5 5 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	
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
2024 Reviewer's Evaluation Criteria and Written Score Sheet – Page 2 - Project No.**

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 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

USDA promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities. AMS encourages applicants to include goals and activities related to reducing and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or adapting to the already occurring climate change in their project's design and implementation.

Additional Comments: