



DEM
RHODE ISLAND

2024 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Proposals

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 10.170

Released:
January 21, 2024

Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Due:
February 28, 2024
No late submissions accepted

Submit Applications via Ecivis platform:

RI DEM Division of Agriculture
235 Promenade Street
Suite 370
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 222-2781
www.dem.ri.gov/programs/agriculture

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About the Program

Purpose

The RI DEM Division of Agriculture (DEM) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture. Please visit USDA’s web site at

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp> to view a comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops, ineligible commodities, and examples of projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops under the SCBGP.

Funding and Duration

DEM anticipates that approximately \$270,000 will be awarded to projects enhancing the competitiveness of Rhode Island specialty crops. A maximum grant award does not exist and neither DEM nor the SCBGP requires a cost sharing or matching requirement. During the 2021 and 2023 funding cycles, the average amount of funding, per award, totaled \$36,772 and \$30,466, respectively. All projects are subject to the availability of funds. Grant funds for SCBGP projects cannot be expended before September 30, 2024, and a Purchase Order issued to the recipient from the State of Rhode Island. No funds can be expended after September 29, 2027. DEM reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Eligibility Requirements

Projects must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome and indicator that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. Funds will not be awarded for projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, grant funds cannot be used to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. Proposals should be initiated by organizations, industry groups, or academic institutions, or should involve collaboration or partnerships between producers, industry groups, academics, or other organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization, or two or more individuals or organizations may propose a joint project. Applicants should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Solicitation Process and Timeline

Competitive Grant Application Review Process

DEM's competitive solicitation process will rely on submission of Grant Proposals. All Grant Proposals must fully describe the project's purpose, objectives, beneficiaries, external support, measurable outcomes, indicators, data collection, budget narrative, oversight, and commitment. An applicant's failure to meet eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in DEM's rejection of the proposal prior to or after the application review.

Grant Proposal

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Application review panel will make recommendations to the Director of Agriculture as to which applicants received the highest rubric scores and which will be included in DEM's 2024 SCBGP State Plan. The Director will ultimately decide which projects will be approved.

Review and Notification

Review Criteria

DEM's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Rhode Island specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent. Concept Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria set forth by the RI DEM Division of Agriculture.

Review Process

DEM will conduct two levels of review during the Grant Proposal review process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether Grant Proposal requirements are met and will assess applicants' past DEM grant performances (if any). The second level is a technical review to evaluate the merits of the Grant Proposals. The DEM SCBGP Review Panel will perform the technical review. This panel is comprised of a collective representation of growers and industry personnel 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 SCBGP Evaluation Criteria Score Sheet.

Notification and Feedback

Applicants not selected to participate in 2024 SCBGP Rhode Island State Plan may contact DEM and request feedback on their Proposals (if available).

Assistance and Questions

Questions regarding this grant and/or the competitive solicitation process should be directed to DEM at (401) 222-2781 or DEM.SpecialtyCrop@dem.ri.gov

Requirements and Limitations

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. They are used to ensure contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principal 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.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Please visit the USDA link below for a full list and justification of allowable and unallowable costs for the SCBG program:

https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf

Indirect Costs

The maximum indirect cost rate is eight percent (8%) of the project's budget.

Applicants are responsible for presenting costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances consistently and must not include costs associated with an established indirect cost rate agreement as direct costs. In addition, applicants cannot allocate a cost as a direct cost if it is also incurred as an indirect cost for the same purpose and vice versa.

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 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 <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> 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. Visit: https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf for additional information regarding allowable and unallowable costs.

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.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (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:

- **Please Note Outcome/Indicators have changed in 2022 SCBGP**

Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops Indicators

1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops ____.

1.1a Adults ____.

1.1b Children ____.

1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops ____.

1.2a Adults ____.

1.2b Children ____.

1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted ____.

1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed ____.

1.5 Increased sales measured in:

1.5a Dollars ____.

1.5b Percent change ____.

1.5c Combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities ____.

Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution

Indicators

- 2.1** Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops ____.
- 2.2** Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops ____.
- 2.3** Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or expanded ____.
- Of those:
- 2.3a** Number of new online portals created to sell specialty crops ____.
 - 2.3b** Number with expanded seasonal availability ____.
 - 2.3c** Number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings ____.
 - 2.3d** Number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings ____.
- 2.4** Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems ____.
- 2.5** Number of stakeholders that adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems ____.
- 2.6** Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems ____.
- Of those established:
- 2.6a** Number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.) ____.
 - 2.6b** Number of partnerships with underserved organizations ____.
- 2.7** Total number of new/improved distribution systems developed ____.
- Of those, the number that:
- 2.7a** Stemmed from new partnerships ____.
 - 2.7b** Increased efficiency ____.
 - 2.7c** reduced costs ____.
 - 2.7d** Increased specialty crop grower participation ____.
 - 2.7e** Expanded customer reach ____.
 - 2.7f** Increased online presence ____.
- 2.8** Number of specialty crop-related jobs:
- 2.8a** Created ____.
 - 2.8b** Maintained ____.
- 2.9** Total number of new individuals who went into specialty crop production as a result of marketing ____.
- Of those, the number who are:
- 2.9a** Beginning farmers or ranchers ____.
 - 2.9b** Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers ____.
- 2.10** Number of market access points that reported increased:
- 2.10a** Revenue ____.
 - 2.10b** Sales ____.
 - 2.10c** Cost-savings ____.

Outcome 3: Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes

Indicators

3.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety

Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ____.

3.2 Number of stakeholders that:

3.2a Established a food safety plan ____.

3.2b Revised or updated their food safety plan ____.

3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new/improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ____.

3.4 Number of prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to mitigate food safety risks ____.

3.5 Number of stakeholders that used grant funds to:

3.5a Purchase ____.

3.5b Upgrade food safety equipment ____.

Outcome 4: Improve Pest and Disease Control Processes

4.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases ____.

4.2 Number of stakeholders that adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations ____.

4.3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases _____. Of those:

4.3a the number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management ____.

4.4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases ____.

4.5 Total number of producers/processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices _____. Of those, the number that reported:

4.5a Reduction in product lost to pest and diseases ____.

4.5b Improved crop quality ____.

4.5c Reduction in labor costs ____.

4.5d Reduction in pesticide use ____.

4.6 Number of producers/processors improving the efficiency of pest and disease control diagnostics and response testing, as reported by:

4.6a Improving speed ____.

4.6b Improving reliability ____.

4.6c Expanding capability ____.

4.6d Increasing testing (i.e., survey work for pests) ____.

Outcome 5: Develop New Seed Varieties and Specialty Crops

Indicators

- 5.1 Number of cultivar and/or variety trials conducted _____. Of those:
 - 5.1a The number that advanced to further stages of development _____.
- 5.2 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties developed _____.
- 5.3 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties released _____.
- 5.4 Number of growers adopting new cultivars and/or varieties _____.
- 5.5 Number of acres planted with new cultivars and/or varieties _____.

Outcome 6: Expand Specialty Crop Research and Development

Indicators

- 6.1 Number of research goals accomplished _____.
- 6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:
 - 6.2a Yielded findings that supported continued research _____.
 - 6.2b Yielded findings that led to completion of study _____.
 - 6.2c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process or technology _____.
- 6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results _____.
- 6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals _____. For each published research output, the:
 - 6.4a Number of views/reads of published research/data _____.
 - 6.4b Number of citations counted _____.

Outcome 7: Improve Environmental Sustainability of Specialty Crops

Indicators

- 7.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies _____.
- 7.2 Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies _____.
- 7.3 Number of producers that adopted environmental best practices or tools _____.
- 7.4 Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/conservation or other environmental outcomes _____.
- 7.5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies that focused on:
 - 7.5a Water quality/ conservation _____.
 - 7.5b Soil health _____.
 - 7.5c Biodiversity _____.
 - 7.5d Reduction in energy use _____.
 - 7.5e Other positive environmental outcomes (optional) _____.
- 7.6 Number of additional acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators/specialty crops _____.

Additional information:

- Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers.
- Beginning Farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer is a farmer 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.

Completing the RI DEM SCBGP Project Application and Proposal

Applicants must respond to the following questions in the eCivis Grant Portal. All questions and the Project Proposal Template are required. Failure to fully complete the Application and Project Proposal will result in disqualification.

Potential applicants are advised to review all sections of this request, and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein will result in non –consideration of the proposal.

All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content are not eligible expenses and shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.

Proposals misdirected to other State locations, or which are otherwise not present in the eCivis portal by the date stated in this offering will be determined to be late and will not be considered.

Applicants are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Grant Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.

Project Title:

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less.

Requested Grant Amount:

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

Project Coordinator, Phone Number, and Email:

Name of the individual overseeing the project and provide his/her phone number and email.

Has the Organization Previously Received Grant Funds through the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture?

Answer yes or no.

Has the Organization Previously Received Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Funds?

Answer yes or no.

Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher? Indicate whether the applicant is a Beginning Farmer or Rancher or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher. 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.

Multi-State Partnership?

Is the application a multi-state partnership? Answer yes or no.

If a Multi-State Partnership, Name the Other State(s):

If the application is a multi-state partnership, name the other state(s).

Funding Area:

Select the most appropriate funding area for the project. Failure to select a funding area will result in disqualification.

Project Purpose:

In two or three paragraphs, 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.

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, and if the approach is rational and sound.

Duration of Project:

All projects will begin no earlier than September 30, 2024, and end no later than September 29, 2026. There is no penalty if projects end prior to September 2026.

Expected Measurable Outcomes:

Proposals must result in at least one of the eight outcomes as predetermined by USDA. Identify the outcome measure the project will achieve and the indicator of success for the 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 7-12 of this document for additional information on the required outcomes. Only one outcome and indicator is required.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the outcome selected and the project's likelihood of success and relevance to the specialty crop industry.

Outcome Indicators:

Provide one indicator for your selected outcome and the related quantifiable results.

Refer to the Outcome Indicators listed on pages 7-12 of this document for additional information on the required indicator.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the predetermined indicator listed under the outcome identified, and the quantifiable results written for the indicator selected.

Explanation to Accomplish Project:

Using the space provided in the Concept Proposal application, explain how the data will be collected and how the project will accomplish the outcomes measure and indicator selected.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based up on how the data will be collected and how well the project will accomplish the outcome and indicator selected.

Projected Budget:

Complete the budget template. All budget items should enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and correlate to the purpose of the project.

Complete each budget category by entering the amount of grant funds budgeted for each category. The budget template includes limited space to provide a brief description of the costs or activities associated with each budget category. Failure to complete the required budget template may result in disqualification.

If applicable, 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.

Please note that matching funds are not a requirement of the SCBGP. However, matching funds are encouraged and may serve as evidence to demonstrate industry commitment to, or support for, the project.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the budget is reasonable and consistent with the project's purpose, outcome, and indicator. Are matching funds or in-kind contributions anticipated? 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 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 mileage rate, and estimated lodging and meal costs. Travel costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual. Allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issues by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>.

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.

Special purpose equipment is allowable, with prior approval for acquisition costs and rental costs, provided the following criterion is met:

1. Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant award.
2. Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible.
3. The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization.

4. Acquired in accordance with organizational practices.
5. Must only be used to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.
6. More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment.
7. Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and
8. Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR 200.313 as applicable.

Prior written approval for allowable costs, that were not included in the approved project and/or the latest budget, include rental of land, special purpose equipment, organization costs, and rearrangement and reconversion costs. If a request is made, it must include the following:

1. A description of and justification for the cost including how it furthers the objectives of the project; and
2. If applicable, a comparison between the most recent budget and the proposed budget as well as an updated budget narrative of the affected cost categories.

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 per unit is under \$5,000, then include this item(s) under Supplies.

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, et cetera) 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 (consultants, contractors, partner organizations, et cetera).

Other: Estimate all other costs such as conferences or meetings, speaker/trainer fees, publication costs, data collection, and other budgeted costs associated with the project.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs cannot exceed eight percent (8%) of the project's budget. Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.

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.

Grant Proposal Submission Instructions

Interested applicants can apply by completing the Grant Proposal application, which is accessible via DEM's web site at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/agriculture/grantsspecialty-crop.php>. Applications must be submitted using the format provided in the Grant Proposal Application. All Grant Proposals must be emailed to DEM.SpecialtyCrop@dem.ri.gov . **Please save Grant Proposals as a Microsoft Word .docx or .pdf file type extension.**

Grant Proposal Timeline	
RFP open to Submit Grant Proposals	January 21, 2024
Grant Proposals Due to DEM	February 28, 2024
Grant Proposals Sent to USDA for Approval	May 1, 2024
Award	
Announcement of Award Funding	Fall 2024

Other Federal Grant Programs

Projects More Relevant to Other Grant Programs

The Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) offers grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by funding collaborative, multi-state projects that address the following regional or national level specialty crop issues: food safety; plant pests and disease; research; crop-specific projects addressing common issues; and marketing and promotion. Multi-state projects must provide solutions to problems that cross state boundaries and must explain the impact the projects will have on a

multi-state or national level. For more information, visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scmp>.

Projects that support the increase 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 (GusNIP) at <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/gus-schumacher-nutrition-incentive-grant-program>.

Projects that support domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, or 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 (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>) or the Local Food Promotion Program (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>).

Projects designed to solve critical United States specialty crop issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research and extension activities that use systems-based, trans-disciplinary approaches can also apply for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI). The intent of the SCRI program is to solve the needs of the various specialty crop industries through the promotion of collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate application of scientific discovery and technology. The SCRI program will give priority to projects that are multi-state, multi-institutional, or trans-disciplinary, and include clearly defined mechanisms to communicate results to producers and the public. For more information, go to <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/specialty-crop-research-initiative-scri>.

Projects designed to explore new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the U.S. agricultural marketing system and have an applied research and marketing focus should consider applying for a Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) grant. For more information, go to <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fsmip>.