

Mississippi Certified Farmers Market Specialty Crop Grant



Overview

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) is accepting grant proposals for Certified Farmers Markets across the state who are interested in promoting Mississippi-grown specialty crops.

A “Certified Farmers Market” means a place, structure or building that is used by two or more Mississippi growers on a frequent basis for the direct sale of their on-farm produce and/or food products to consumers. At least 50% of the agricultural products offered for sale must be produced by the grower or under the grower’s direction within the State of Mississippi. A grower or grower representative must be present during market hours when his/her products are offered for purchase. The market must be operated by a grower’s association; a certified, non-profit organization; or a government entity (state, county, municipal, tribal, etc.). To learn more about the Mississippi Certified Farmers Market program, visit our website: <https://www.mdac.ms.gov/bureaus-departments/farmers-market/certified-farmers-markets-program/>.

The goal of this grant program is to increase awareness and availability of Mississippi-grown specialty crops sold at Certified Farmers Markets. Specialty crops are defined by law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.”

Certified Farmers Markets can apply for up to \$1,000 to promote specialty crops sold at their respective farmers market.

Requirements

Markets with the intent to become a Certified Farmers Market may submit an application at any time as this grant is on a first come, first serve basis. Applications that are complete and

approved will be notified that funds will only be awarded once the market has been approved as a Certified Farmers Market by MDAC Market Development Division.

Markets interested in applying must submit a completed application to MDAC. Markets will have until the end of their respective market season or December 31, 2016, whichever comes first, to expend funds. Funds will be available on a reimbursement basis.

Awarded markets will be responsible for submitting a final report no later than 45 days after funds have been expended. Reports should include tasks completed and reflect on the specialty crops sold at the market including number of vendors (compared to last year), sales, availability, and any other information.

Who is Eligible?

All Certified Farmers Markets in Mississippi. This program is on a first come, first serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per market.

Allowable Purchases/Awarded Grants

Grant funds may only be used for specialty crop promotion. Specialty crops are defined in law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” Below is a list of allowable purchases that may be used, but not limited to, for this grant program. Items not listed below must obtain prior approval from MDAC before purchasing.

- Specialty crop signage
- Specialty crop advertising
- Specialty crop marketing
- Other- a written request must be submitted to MDAC with justification on how this purchase will solely increase the competitiveness of specialty crops. Markets must receive approval by MDAC before any funds can be expended, to ensure that expenditures fit within the scope of this grant.

All funds must solely promote specialty crops and not the market itself. For example, you could say:

- Promoting tomatoes while including an organization’s logo in the promotion is acceptable, while generally promoting an organization’s logo is not.
- Promotional items could say “Buy XYZ Grown Apples” but not “XYZ Grown”, which promotes XYZ generically.
- A promotional campaign to increase producer sales of “XYZ Grown fruits and vegetables” is acceptable while increasing membership in “XYZ Grown” generally is not.

Advertising and promotional materials purchased with grant funds including, but not limited to: radio, television, print advertisements, posters, etc. are highly encouraged to seek approval from MDAC before publicized or finalized. Due to the nature of this grant program, if ads and other materials do not meet the requirements of this program, they will not be reimbursed.

It is also encouraged to utilize the Certified Farmers Market logo and the following statement on print materials and advertisements related to the project when possible: “Funds for this project were provided through the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, USDA Specialty Crop Grant Program.”

MDAC will disperse grant funds on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursements will be made on an as-needed basis, but requests for reimbursements should be made regularly and as soon as possible. A request for reimbursement should include: an invoice to MDAC with the amount requested; list of expenditures; and documentation of the expenditures (paid invoices, receipts, canceled checks, etc.). To ensure grant funds are in compliance with regulations, markets will also be required to submit copies of advertisements, promotions, materials, etc. of which the grant funds were utilized.

Markets will also need to sign up with MAGIC (Mississippi’s Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration), to receive payment. Awarded markets will receive information on how to do this.

Markets will have until the end of their respective market season or December 31, 2016, whichever comes first, to expend funds.

Failure to follow requirements or misuse of grant funds may result in forfeiture of grant funds; in some cases, markets may have to repay all or part of the grant funds to MDAC.

Any change in the originally approved application must be submitted in writing to MDAC and acquire approval before completing tasks.

Eligible/Ineligible Specialty Crops

Below is a list of eligible specialty crops including fruits and tree nuts, vegetables, culinary herbs and spices, medicinal plants, as well as nursery, floriculture, and horticulture crops. There is also a separate list of ineligible commodities. This is not an all-inclusive list, please visit the USDA website: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp or contact MDAC if you have any questions.

Eligible Specialty Crops

Blueberries	Ginseng
Chickpeas	Herbs
Christmas trees	Honey
Cocoa	Hops
Coffee	Lavender
Cut flowers	Lentils
Dry edible beans	Maple syrup
Dry peas	Mushrooms
Foliage	Organic fruits and vegetables
Fruit grapes for wine	Peppermint
Garlic	Potatoes
Ginger root	Spearmint

Sweet Corn
Sweet Potatoes
Sweet Sorghum for human consumption

Vanilla
Vegetable seed

Ineligible Commodities

Cotton and cottonseed	Peanuts
Feed crops such as barley, corn, hay, oats, sorghum grain, millet, alfalfa	Range grasses
Flaxseed	Rice
Food grains such as rice, rye, wheat	Sugar beets
Livestock and dairy products, including eggs	Sod
Marine or fresh water aquaculture	Sorghum
Oil crops such as peanut, soybean, sunflower, safflower, rapeseed, canola, mustard seed, evening primrose	Sugarcane
	Tobacco
	Tofu

Please visit the **USDA-AMS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill website** (www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp) for a more comprehensive listing of eligible and ineligible commodities, listed under "Definition of Specialty Crops."

Program Contact

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Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
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CFM Specialty Crop Grant Template

Market Information

Note: Only one grant can be awarded per market.

Name of market	
Street Address (location)	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Mailing address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Number of Years in Operation	
Months/Days/Hours of Operation	
How many vendors participate in the market?	
How many are specialty crop vendors?	

Grant Coordinator(s) Contact Information

Main Contact (Name)	
Mailing Address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Phone	
Best Time to Call	
Email	
Are you a full-time, part-time, or volunteer market manager?	

Additional Volunteer(s)

Please provide us with names and contact information of those that will also be helping with the specialty crop grant.

4. Please provide a timeline/work plan of activities that are necessary to accomplish the project objectives. State who will be responsible and the dates or months the activity will take place.

5. Please provide a detailed and itemized budget. An itemized budget should describe a list of purchases with price estimates, quantities, etc. to show how the budget was derived. Items not listed will not be eligible for reimbursement from MDAC. Prior approval must be received before funds are spent on items not listed or approved in the original proposal.

Agreement and Signature

By submitting this application, I affirm that I am willing to oversee the grant program and have read and understand the guidelines of this program. I agree to the conditions set forth and the information presented has been answered truthfully, fully, and completely. Should duties transfer to someone else; I will notify MDAC of the changes.

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

Funding Request

Amount of grant money applying for: \$_____

Request should match information presented in the detailed budget above.

Return Completed Applications to:

Susan Head
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