

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM – FARM BILL

Request for Proposals

Fiscal Year 2016 Funding Cycle

**Application Deadline:
May 16, 2016**

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
& COMMERCE**

*Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
P.O. Box 1609
Jackson, MS 39215*

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill

Request for Proposals

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Legislative authority

Legislative authority is provided under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 ([7 U.S.C. 1621 note](#)) and amended under section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 (the Farm Bill). SCBGP is currently implemented under [7 CFR part 1291](#) (published March 27, 2009; 74 FR 13313).

Purpose

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) assists State departments of agriculture (the State agencies responsible for agriculture) in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in solely enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. grown specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). A state department of agriculture is the agency, commission, or department of a State government responsible for agriculture within the State.

Project types

SCBGP encourages States to develop projects solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting 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, 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 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.

Projects more relevant for other federal grant programs

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 [Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grants Program](#).

Projects that support domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to consumer market opportunities, 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](#) and [Local Food Promotion Program](#).

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 <http://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each state submitting an application that is approved by USDA will receive an estimated base grant of approximately \$208,776.33 plus an additional amount based on the most recent available value of specialty crop cash receipts in the state. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) expects to receive \$336,946.96 for FY2016 funding year.

It is the intent of MDAC to develop a state plan requesting funds to implement projects that will significantly and positively impact the specialty crop industry in Mississippi. This invitation for proposals has been developed to provide all interested parties an opportunity to apply for these funds.

ELIGIBLE GRANT APPLICANTS

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is the authorized agency to assume the lead role in the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). According to USDA guidelines, grant funds cannot be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual because these projects do not enhance the specialty crop industry's competitiveness. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Proposals are encouraged from state and local organizations, academia, producer associations, industry or community-based groups, and other specialty crop organizations. Applicants may submit more than one proposal. If more than one proposal is submitted, please prioritize the submissions.

ELIGIBLE GRANT PROJECTS

To be eligible for a grant, projects must **solely** enhance the competitiveness of Mississippi grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Specialty crops are defined in law as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture." Specialty crops are plants that are intensively cultivated. There are many plants that are specialty crops when cultivated but are also collected from wild populations. Wild plants are not considered specialty crops even though they may be used for the same purpose as cultivated plants. For a list of common specialty crops, see Attachment I or the [SCBGP website](#).

Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in solely enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops (see attachment II, page 30).

Applications for grant funds 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. Grant funds cannot be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual because these projects do not enhance the specialty crop industry's competitiveness. In addition, recipients and subrecipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

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 Cooperative 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 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 methods.

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 or organization.
- 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 its membership.

Project proposals and goals must focus on the following priority areas:

- Research & Development
- Promotion/Marketing

- Education/Extension
- Economics
- Ag Policy

Multi-State Partnerships

Multi-state partnerships are encouraged and should provide solutions to problems that cross state boundaries such as, but not limited to, addressing good agricultural practices, food safety, research on crop productivity or quality, pest and disease management, or commodity-specific projects addressing common issues in multi-state regions. Applicants can also consider submitting those projects to the [Specialty Crop Multi-State Program](#).

A multi-state partnership is a project that implements activities with measurable outcomes that benefit two or more U.S. states and/or territories.

Project Duration

Specialty crop block grant funds will be made available around **September 30, 2016**. Funded projects must be completed by **September 29, 2018**.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

All SCBGP awards are subject to the most recent award terms and conditions, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR part 200)*, and other laws and regulations affecting Federal assistance.

All costs must be allowable in accordance with the Federal cost principles outlined in [2 CFR part 200 Subpart E](#).

The following list describes specific funding restrictions under the SCBGP. This section is not intended to be all-inclusive. The applicant should consult the Federal cost principles for the applicable organization for the complete explanation of the allowability of costs they address. Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing the associated Federal cost principles should contact the state department of agriculture.

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. In situations where project benefits include non-eligible specialty crops (i.e. produce market selling crafts and meats), project budgets must be pro-rated to only include specialty crops.

For more detailed information, see attachment III, page 35.

Restrictions and limitations on grant funds

Specialty Crop Block Grant Funds shall not be used to cover the following expenses:

- Administrative costs (overhead expenses and indirect costs)
- Paying off existing debt
- Substituting existing efforts or research already funded
- Purchase of general purpose equipment, land, or buildings
- Business entertainment including meals or business gifts
- Lobbying or political efforts including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying

- Salaries for project coordinators, organizers, etc. (anyone involved in the grant)
- Donations and contributions
- Starting a specialty crop farm, grove, garden, or business for the purposes of profiting one individual

Travel expenses will be limited to cover the expenses of a maximum of two travelers per trip.

Although General Purpose Equipment is not an allowed expenditure, Special Purpose Equipment is allowable with prior approval from USDA. Special Purpose Equipment means equipment used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities.

Supplanting

Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in Mississippi, rather than replace State funds. SCBGP funds must supplement the expenditure of applicant's funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace applicant's funds. Additionally, Federal funding may not replace State funding that is required under [7 U.S.C. 1621\(d\)\(3\)](#). In instances where a question of supplanting arises, the applicant will be required to substantiate that the reduction in non-Federal resources occurred for reasons other than the receipt or expected receipt of Federal funds.

General Supplanting Definition. An organization reduces their funds for an activity specifically because Federal funds are available (or expected to be available) to fund that same activity.

- Example: State funds are appropriated for a stated purpose and Federal funds are awarded for that same purpose. (If a state has \$50.00 budgeted for a specialty crop program and the Federal Government awards a \$100.00 grant for the same specialty crop program, the total project must expend \$150.00 – the State cannot remove the original \$50.00 and use it for something else).

SCBGP PROJECT PROFILE TEMPLATE

Completed applications must include a signed Acknowledgement form and a narrative explaining how grant funds will be utilized to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Topics that are to be addressed in each section of the narrative are listed. Please address all topics listed. Incomplete narratives will not be accepted. The acceptable font size for the narrative is 12 pitch and all margins at one inch. **The number of pages of the narrative is limited to 6 pages.** The following format is to be followed:

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant (or lead agency in the case of multi-agency projects) administering the project

Name of Project Coordinator

Mailing Address

Telephone

Fax

Email Address

Organizational Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number. If your organization does not know its DUNS number or needs to register for one, visit Dun and Bradstreet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or call 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number is required before funds can be awarded to any organization.

Project Starting Date and Ending Date

PROJECT TITLE

Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less in the space below.

DURATION OF PROJECT

Start Date: Start Date

End Date: End Date

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Include a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. A Project Summary provides a very brief (one sentence, if possible) description of your project. A Project Summary includes:

- 1. The name of the applicant organization that if awarded a grant will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the State department of agriculture to lead and execute the project,*
- 2. A concise outline the project's outcome(s), and*
- 3. A description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.*

FOR EXAMPLE:

The ABC University will mitigate the spread of citrus greening (Huanglongbing) by developing scientifically-based practical measures to implement in a quarantine area and disseminating results to stakeholders through grower meetings and field days.

PRIORITY AREA

Identify which priority area is the main focus of this proposed project.

PROJECT PURPOSE

PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC ISSUE, PROBLEM OR NEED THAT THE PROJECT WILL ADDRESS

Clearly state the purpose of each project. The purpose should include the specific issue, problem, interest, or need to be addressed and why the project is important and timely.

PROVIDE A LISTING OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT THIS PROJECT HOPES TO ACHIEVE

Add more objectives by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete objectives that aren't necessary.

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

Objective 4

Add other objectives as necessary

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Estimate the number of project beneficiaries:.....Enter the Number of Beneficiaries

Does this project directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers as defined in the RFA?

Yes No

Does this project directly benefit beginning farmers as defined in the RFA? Yes No

Who are the specialty crop beneficiaries of the project?

How will the project benefit the specialty crop beneficiaries?

What is the potential economic impact of the project if it can be estimated?

If applicable, how will the project have a multi-state (benefitting two more or states) or national impact?

STATEMENT OF SOLELY ENHANCING SPECIALTY CROPS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that this project **solely** enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops in accordance with and defined by [7 U.S.C. 1621](#).
Further information regarding the definition of a specialty crop can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp.

CONTINUATION PROJECT INFORMATION

If your project is continuing the efforts of a previously funded SCBGP project, address the following:

DESCRIBE HOW THIS PROJECT WILL DIFFER FROM AND BUILD ON THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS

PROVIDE A SUMMARY (3 TO 5 SENTENCES) OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS

PROVIDE LESSONS LEARNED ON POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

What was previously learned from implementing this project, including potential improvements?

How are the lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes?

DESCRIBE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE PROJECT BECOMING SELF-SUSTAINING AND NOT INDEFINITELY DEPENDENT ON GRANT FUNDS

OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Did you submit this project to a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?

Yes **No**

IF YOUR PROJECT IS RECEIVING OR WILL POTENTIALLY RECEIVE FUNDS FROM ANOTHER FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Identify the Federal or State grant program(s).

-

Describe how the SCBGP project differs from or supplements the other grant program(s) efforts.

WORK PLAN

This section will address the activities that are necessary to accomplish the project objectives, who will do the work, and when the activities will be accomplished. The following shall be addressed in this section:

- **Project Activity:** Describe the project activities that are necessary to accomplish the objectives. Make sure you include your performance monitoring/data collection activities. If outcomes will be measured outside of the grant period, indicate how the monitoring will occur after the grant period ends.
- Include a timeline that indicates when each activity will occur (at least month and year) and beginning and end dates for the project. Make sure the work plan timeline shows that the project will be completed within the allowable grant period.
- Indicate the project participants who will do the work of each activity. If collaborative agreements or subcontracts are used, make sure to specify their role and responsibilities in performing project activities. If you request funds for travel, these activities must also be included.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project).

EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

You must choose at least one of the eight outcomes listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#), which were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the performance of the SCBGP on a national level (see attachment II, page 30).

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

Select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable for this project from the listing below.

- Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (required for marketing projects)
- Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- 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
- Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety

- Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)

Provide at least one indicator listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#) and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a.

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

MISCELLANEOUS OUTCOME MEASURE

In the unlikely event that the outcomes and indicators above the selected outcomes are not relevant to your project, you must develop a project-specific outcome(s) and indicator(s) which will be subject to approval by AMS.

DATA COLLECTION TO REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator in the space below.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

All expenses described in this Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP (see attachment III, page 35).

Budget Summary	
Expense Category	Funds Requested
Intermittent Labor	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal	

Total Budget	
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INTERMITTENT LABOR

Applicants may request funds for intermittent labor (meaning labor for irregular intervals, not full-time, continuous or steady), for hourly positions. These workers cannot be currently (salaried) employed by the institution nor can these funds be used to supplement any salary or wage of the PI or anyone directly involved in the creation of the grant project.

Labor hired are meant to assist the PI to aid in planting, maintaining, and harvesting, etc. in projects that heavily rely on research through extensive field plots and trials. Workers can only be paid for work that directly relates to the specialty crop block grant project so only specialty crops are benefiting.

All requests are subject to approval and must include the following:

- Description of the request and the tasks the workers will do, estimate of number of workers to hire, estimate of number of hours for each task, the hourly wage proposed and the fringe rate (if required to comply by your institution's regulations, if so please detail).
- Requests for hired workers cannot exceed 15% of the total budget.

#	Description of work/tasks	Number of workers/hours requested	Hourly wage rate	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				

Intermittent Labor Subtotal	
------------------------------------	--

INTERMITTENT LABOR JUSTIFICATION

For each individual listed in the above table, describe the activities to be completed by name/title including approximately when activities will occur. Add more by copying and pasting the existing listing or deleting those that aren't necessary.

Intermittent Laborer 1:

Intermittent Laborer 2:

Intermittent Laborer 3:

Add other Intermittent Laborers as necessary

FRINGE BENEFITS

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's intermittent laborers described in the above section, if required, that will be paid with SCBGP funds.

#	Name/Title	Fringe Benefit Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Fringe Subtotal	
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TRAVEL

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>. See the Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Travel, and Foreign Travel for further guidance.

Travel expenses will be limited to cover the expenses of a maximum of two travelers per trip.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

Travel Subtotal	
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TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION

For each trip listed in the above table describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 2 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 3 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Add other Trips as necessary

CONFORMING WITH YOUR TRAVEL POLICY

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#) as applicable.

EQUIPMENT

Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. "Special purpose equipment" is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. See the Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - Special Purpose for further guidance

Rental of "general purpose equipment" must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - General Purpose for definition, and Rental or Lease Costs of Buildings, Vehicles, Land and Equipment.

#	Item Description	Rental or Purchase	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				

Equipment Subtotal	
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EQUIPMENT JUSTIFICATION

For each Equipment item listed in the above table describe how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Add more equipment by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete equipment that isn't necessary.

Equipment 1:

Equipment 2:

Equipment 3:

Add other Equipment as necessary

SUPPLIES

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices for further information.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

Supplies Subtotal	
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SUPPLIES JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT

Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant, each must be described separately. (Repeat this section for each contract/consultant.)

ITEMIZED CONTRACTOR(S)/CONSULTANT(S)

Provide a list of contractors/consultants, detailing out the name, hourly/flat rate, and overall cost of the services performed. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.

#	Name/Organization	Hourly Rate/Flat Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Contractual/Consultant Subtotal	
--	--

CONTRACTUAL JUSTIFICATION

Provide for each of your real or anticipated contractors listed above a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/general-schedule/>), provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Contractual and Consultant Costs for acceptable justifications.

Contractor/Consultant 1:

Contractor/Consultant 2:

Contractor/Consultant 3:

Add other Contractors/Consultants as necessary

CONFORMING WITH YOUR PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through.326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

OTHER

Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

If you budget meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Meals for further guidance.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

Other Subtotal	
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OTHER JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each item listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project’s objective(s) and outcome(s).

PROGRAM INCOME

Program income is gross income—earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant—directly generated by the grant-supported activity, or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.

Source/Nature of Program Income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income into the project to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops	Estimated Income

Program Income Total	
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Acknowledgement must be signed by the authorized representative(s) of the proposing organization.

I/we the undersigned applicants, _____ of

(Name/names)

_____, Mississippi, hereby apply for Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

(City/cities)

Funds under the terms and conditions of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and

the United States Department of Agriculture, in the amount of \$ _____.

(Amount requested)

The undersigned hereby warrants to the State of Mississippi that to the best of my/our knowledge, all information presented in this grant application is factual and true; that I/we understand that if this proposal is funded, I/we will be required to sign a grant agreement and other necessary documentation containing terms and conditions upon which funds will be released; and that I/we understand that I/we will be required to submit progress reports (quarterly and annually) and a final report at the completion of the project as a condition to participating in this grant program. All grant funding is subject to the availability and receipt of federal funds by MDAC.

The undersigned understands that the selection will be determined by MDAC based on criteria designed to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Mississippi. The undersigned understands, due to the availability of a limited supply of funds, that every qualifying project may not be approved or receive funding and that approved projects may be funded in whole or part.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print: _____ Title: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print: _____ Title: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print: _____ Title: _____

Completed application packets must be **received by 5:00 p.m. on May 16, 2016. No late applications will be accepted.** An electronic version of the application, in Microsoft Word format, as well as a hard copy is required.

Mail completed applications to:

Susan Head, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
P.O. Box 1609
Jackson, MS 39215
Email: susan@mdac.ms.gov
Phone: (601) 359-1196

APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Grant applications will be reviewed by an Advisory Committee. Applications will be evaluated based on the merit of the submitted proposal narrative and the criteria listed below. See Application Guidelines in the previous section for requirements. Recommendations may be made to suggest adjustments to the monetary grant requests, proposed scope of work, and/or project budgets.

Criteria	Maximum Points	Points Received
Project Purpose		
How well does the applicant define the issue, problem, interest, or need? Does this project address a significant problem or important need for Mississippi's specialty crop industry? Is the approach rational and sound?	20	
Potential Impact		
Does the project provide a direct benefit to Mississippi's specialty crop producers? What is the economic value of the crop(s) benefiting from this project in proportion to the total value of Mississippi's specialty crop industry? What is the number of intended beneficiaries of the project? To what extent will the project enhance the competitiveness of Mississippi's specialty crop industry?	25	
Expected Measurable Outcomes		
Does the project have at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly supports the project purpose? Does the measurable outcome include a specific goal, target, benchmark, and performance measure? Does the applicant describe how the outcomes will be monitored? Are the goals realistic and obtainable?	15	
Work Plan		
How do the tasks and activities relate to the project objectives? Is the project feasible? Is the timeline reasonable? Does the project have a high likelihood of success?	15	
Budget		
Is the budget realistic and will the project yield a positive return on investment? Do requested budget items/activities correlate to the purpose/goals of the project? Does the budget narrative clearly identify the necessity of each expected expense? Has the proposed project been accompanied with matching funds?	15	
Project Oversight/Project Commitment		
Does the project have adequate oversight to endure proper administration? Is industry support for the project demonstrated?	10	
Total	100	

VIII. Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be responsible for submitting progress reports to MDAC as required.

Quarterly Reports: Quarterly reports detailing progress being made towards the project along with a breakdown of expenses shall be submitted quarterly to MDAC.

Annual Performance Reports: Grantees shall submit an annual performance report to MDAC. Annual performance reports shall include the following:

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

An Annual Performance Report must be received within 90 days after the end of the first year of the date of the signed grant agreement and 90 days after the end of each subsequent year until the expiration date of the grant period.

ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT TEMPLATE

Annual Performance Reports must illustrate the progress made toward the completion of each project within the grant agreement.

If a project is completed at the time of Annual Performance Report submission, the project report should be submitted in Final Performance Report format.

PROJECT TITLE

Provide the project's title. (Must be the title used in the approved State Plan or amendment.)

PROJECT EXPENDITURES TO DATE

EXPENDITURES

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		
Direct Costs Sub-Total		

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Total Costs		

PROGRAM INCOME

Source/Nature (i.e., registration fees)	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Amount Earned
Total Program Income Earned		

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

Address the below sections as they relate to this period of performance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Estimate the Total Percentage (%) of Work Completed on the Project.....Enter Percent%

List your accomplishments for this period of performance and indicate how these accomplishments assist in the fulfillment of your project’s objective(s), outcome(s), and/or indicator(s).

Accomplishment	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator

CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Provide any challenges to the completion of your project or any positive developments outside of the project’s original intent that you experienced during this period of performance. If those challenges or developments resulted or will result in corrective actions and/or changes to the project, include those in the space below.

Challenges or Developments	Corrective Action and/or Project Change(s)

SOLELY ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS

If the project has the potential to benefit non-specialty crop commodities, describe the activities that were conducted to ensure that grant funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Final report: final reports will be submitted to MDAC. Final reports will include the following:

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

A Final Performance Report must be received within 90 days after the end of the grant agreement.

FINAL PROJECT REPORT TEMPLATE

Final Performance Reports must illustrate the completion of each project within the grant agreement. Each project shall be outlined as separate project profiles. You will report on projects in the same order they were submitted in the approved State Plan and subsequent amendments.

PROJECT TITLE

Provide the project's title. (Must be the same title used in the approved State Plan or amendment.)

PROJECT IMPACT AND FINDINGS

Include a summary of the project results of 250 words or less, suitable for dissemination to the public. A statement of results provides a brief description of your project, its success, and/or lessons learned. A statement of results should:

- 1. Include the name of the organization that led and executed the project (State department of agriculture or subrecipient);*
- 2. Capture the project's purpose and activities completed;*
- 3. Outline the outcomes and indicators achieved, results/important findings and lessons learned; and*
- 4. Highlight the target population reached and products developed (including intended use and audience).*

For example:

ABC State University improved protocol of integrated management of bacterial spot in tomatoes through focusing on the tomato seedling production stage and educating growers on best management practices. Researchers tested 240 processing and fresh market lines of tomato varieties in addition to 93 wild species for each variety's resistance to bacterial spot. At the test's conclusion, it was possible for researchers to obtain data sufficient to identify accessions and lines with elevated resistance to *X. gardneri* (the cause of bacterial spot) through expanded greenhouse screening. These results were disseminated to tomato transplant producers via comprehensive vegetable disease fact sheets that were posted online and which have been viewed over 1,700 times by 223 unique visitors. Furthermore, approximately 270 stakeholders were presented with project information at two field nights, two tomato disease workshops, and at a symposium.

BENEFICIARIES

Number of project beneficiaries: Enter Number of Project Beneficiaries

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

OBJECTIVES

Provide the approved project's objectives.

#	Objective	Completed?	
		Yes	No*
1			
2			
3			
4			

**If no is selected for any of the listed objectives, you must expand upon this in the challenges and lessons learned sections.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

List your accomplishments for the project's period of performance, including the impact they had on the project's beneficiaries, and indicate how these accomplishments assist in the fulfillment of your project's objective(s), outcome(s), and/or indicator(s).

Accomplishment/Impact	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator

CHALLENGES

If you experienced any challenges during the project's period of performance, provide a listing of them below. Also, provide the corrective actions you took to address these issues. If you did not attain the approved outcome(s) and indicator(s), provide an explanation in the Corrective Actions column.

Challenge	Corrective Actions

LESSONS LEARNED

Provide recommendations or advice that others may use to improve their performance in implementing similar projects.

CONTINUATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS (IF APPLICABLE)

Describe your plans for continuing the project (sustainability; capacity building) and/or disseminating the project results.

OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

Provide the results of the project outcome(s) and indicator(s) as approved in your State Plan and project proposal. The results of the outcome(s) and indicator(s) will be used to evaluate the performance of the SCBGP on a national level.

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

Select the Outcome Measure(s) that were approved for your project.

- Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales
- Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- 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
- Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety
- Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)

Provide the indicator approved for your project and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator.

DATA COLLECTION

Explain what data was collected, how it was collected, the evaluation methods used, and how the data was analyzed to derive the quantifiable indicator.

CONTACT PERSON

Contact Person for the Project.....Enter Contact First and Last Name
Telephone Number.....Enter Phone Number
Email Address.....Enter Email Address

FEDERAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES TO DATE

EXPENDITURES

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Personnel		

Cost Category	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Federal Expenditures (Federal Funds ONLY)
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		
Direct Costs Sub-Total		
Total Costs		

PROGRAM INCOME

Source/Nature (i.e., registration fees)	Amount Approved in Budget	Actual Amount Earned
Total Program Income Earned		

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide additional information available (i.e., publications, websites, photographs) that is not applicable to any of the prior sections.

Be sure to include any documents, publications, or other attachments referenced throughout the report. If the attachments are large, the State Department of Agriculture should consider combining them as an appendix to the full report and submitting the appendix as a separate file.

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT

Payment of funds to the grantee will be made on a monthly or quarterly reimbursement basis or as requested by the applicant. To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (receipts, invoices, etc.), a budget report, and a budget narrative explaining expenses.

Requests for fund advances will be considered on a case by case basis. If a funding advance is requested, the need for the advance must be clearly stated in the project proposal. When funding advances are made, any unobligated (unencumbered) balance of cash at the end of the grant period must immediately be refunded back to MDAC.

The obligation of funds may be terminated without further cause unless the grantee commences the timely drawdown of funds. The initial drawdown of funds must be made within the first year of the grant period.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Susan Head
(601) 359-1196
susan@mdac.ms.gov

For more information about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, please view the program outline at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce reserves the right to deny any or all proposals received; request additional information on project proposals; recommend partial funding for proposals that may be less than the amount requested in the grant application; and link the release of project funds to completion of necessary, timely progress reports. All grant funding is subject to the availability and receipt of federal funds.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

Attachment I

ELIGIBLE SPECIALTY CROPS

Commonly recognized fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture)

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

Ineligible Commodities

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

Attachment II

OUTCOME INDICATORS AND MEASURES

Fiscal Year 2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant Performance Evaluation

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP at a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

- 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 AMS.
- 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 OMB and Congress on these national outcome measures.
- AMS will review the quality of the information we receive 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

Outcome 1: To enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales

THIS IS MANDATORY FOR ALL MARKETING AND PROMOTION PROJECTS.

Outcome Definition:

Marketing and Promotion

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;
- Export market development;
- Retail promotions including point-of-purchase items, labels, packaging etc.;
- Farmers market promotions; and
- Marketing and promotion campaigns with an education component directed to consumers.

The specific measure must be 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 should 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.

Indicator: Sales increased from \$ _____ to \$ _____ and by _____ percent, as result of marketing and/or promotion activities

AMS understands that sales can be impacted by a host of unrelated issues including trade disputes, phytosanitary issues, export conditions, weather, and other factors affecting the farmer, supply chain, retailers, wholesalers and/or consumers. The above factors demonstrate that even a perfectly executed marketing campaign can result in sales remaining constant or even declining. These factors and events that either positively or negatively impacted the sales of a project can be explained in the performance report.

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 _____

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 diseases. _____
[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 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.
- 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.

Attachment III

ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

The following list describes specific funding restrictions under the AMS SCBGP. This section is not intended to be all-inclusive. The applicant should consult the Federal cost principles for the applicable organization for the complete explanation of the allowability of costs they address or the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

Item	Description
Alcoholic Beverages	<p>Unallowable for alcoholic beverages except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of an eligible processed product (products prepared or created for the purposes of promoting a specialty crop but that require other ingredients are considered a processed product). A processed product is defined as a product that constitutes greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.</p>
Aquaponics	<p><i>Allowable</i> as long as the crops that are being grown are eligible specialty crops and the focus of the project is on the specialty crops and not the fish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project to determine whether carp, catfish, or tilapia are best for growing lettuce is acceptable. • A project to market broccoli grown through aquaponics is acceptable. • A project to compare the quality of lettuce grown in water to lettuce grown in a greenhouse is acceptable. • A project to study whether lettuce or tomato produced the highest yield of tilapia is not acceptable. • A project to farm fish using an aquaponics system and then sell the fish is not acceptable. • A project to grow specialty crops where both the specialty crops and the fish are sold is not acceptable. <p>For more information on constructing or purchasing an aquaponics system, see Equipment-General Purpose and Equipment – Special Purpose.</p>
Conferences	<p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of conferences as defined in 2 CFR 200.432. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal recipient or subrecipient as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals (see Meals for restrictions), and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the recipient or subrecipient must report fees as program income (See Program Income).</p> <p>The AMS SCBGP encourages the use of technologies such as webinars,</p>

	teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room.
Construction and Renovation and Land or Building Acquisition	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees).</p> <p>Building means any permanent structure that is designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of person, animals or property having a permanent roof that is supported by columns or walls.</p>
Contractual/ Consultant Costs (Professional Services)	<p><i>Allowable subject to limitations below.</i> Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for contractor/consultant employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/general-schedule/ . This does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.</p> <p>If rates exceed this amount, one of the following justifications must be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the steps you took to hire a contractor, which includes obtaining a cost/price analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to review and evaluate each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the complexity or uniqueness of the project, the pool of available and qualified contractors is limited. Therefore, the selected contractor’s specialized qualifications necessitate hiring at a rate beyond a GS-15 step 10. (Please outline the unique qualifications of the contractor.)
Contributions and Donations	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, from the recipient or subrecipient to other entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A non-profit entity using grant funds to purchase produce to donate to other entities and individuals is unallowable.
Entertainment	<p><i>Unallowable.</i> Entertainment costs include amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as bands, orchestras, dance groups, tickets to shows, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities).</p>
Equipment,	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment, vehicles,</p>

<p>Buildings, and Land</p>	<p>buildings and land.</p> <p><i>Allowable with conditions</i> for renting or leasing of general purpose equipment, buildings, vehicles, and with prior approval for land. Vehicles may be leased, but not purchased. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own). The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle. For vehicle and equipment leases or rentals with an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000, rates should be in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable vehicles and equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the vehicle or equipment leased.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criterion is met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 solely 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 part 200.313 as applicable. <p>Equipment Definitions</p> <p>Equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.</p> <p>Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to ready the asset for its intended use. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.</p> <p>General Purpose Equipment means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor</p>
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	<p>vehicles.</p> <p>Special Purpose Equipment is equipment used only for research or technical activities. Examples include grape harvesters, high tunnels, fruit or vegetable coolers, vegetable washing machines, fruit or vegetable processing equipment, etc.</p>
Foreign Travel	<p>For purposes of this provision, “foreign travel” includes any travel outside Canada, Mexico, the United States, and any United States territories and possessions. However, the term “foreign travel” for a governmental unit located in a foreign country means travel outside that country. An applicant with a proposal that involves foreign market development must determine if the project is more appropriate for grant programs administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service or funded through the State-Regional Trade Groups. SCBGP recommends that applicants search the Foreign Agricultural Service database of GAIN reports (http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Pages/Default.aspx) to ensure that proposals will not duplicate information that already exists. Any proposal involving foreign travel must be well justified.</p> <p>See Travel in this table for more information on travel costs.</p>
Fundraising	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions, regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used. This includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital.</p>
Goods or Services for Personal Use	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of goods or services for personal use of the recipient’s or subrecipient’s employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.</p>
Health and Nutrition Messaging	<p><i>Allowable</i> when health and nutrition information complies with regulations and policies of the:</p> <p><i>Federal Trade Commission</i></p> <p>http://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/bureaus-offices/bureau-consumer-protection</p> <p>AND</p> <p><i>U.S. Food and Drug Administration</i></p> <p>http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/default.htm.</p> <p>Nutrition and health claims must be truthful, not misleading or deceptive, and include adequate disclaimers if appropriate.</p> <p>Health and nutrition information should align with the most up-to-date Dietary Guidelines.</p>

<p>Information Technology Systems</p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for information technology systems having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established in accordance by generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) by the non-Federal recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes or \$5,000. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to ready the asset for its intended use. Acquisition costs for software includes those development costs capitalized in accordance with GAAP.</p> <p>Information technology systems include computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources. Computing devices means machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically, including accessories (or “peripherals”) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. Examples of unallowable information technology systems include service contracts, operating systems, printers, and computers that have an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for website development, mobile apps, etc.</p>
<p>Lobbying</p>	<p>The recipient should obtain an advance understanding with the AMS SCBGP if it intends to engage in certain activities intended to influence Federal, State or local government entities.</p>
<p>Meals</p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for breakfasts for conference attendees because it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for meal costs that are duplicated in meeting participant’s per diem or subsistence allowances.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for lunch or dinner meals if the costs are reasonable and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for meals consumed while in official travel status. They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization’s established written travel policies.</p>
<p>Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs</p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of membership in any civic or community organization.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of membership in business, technical, and professional organizations.</p>

Organization Costs	<p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for organization costs per 2 CFR 200.455.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.</p>
Participant Support Costs	<p><i>Allowable</i> for such items as stipends or subsistence allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, and focus groups.</p> <p>See also Advertising and Public Relations - Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts.</p>
Political Activities	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs	<p><i>Allowable with conditions (see specific costs below)</i> if the primary purpose is to promote the sale of an eligible specialty crop by either stimulating interest in a particular specialty crop or disseminating technical information or messages for the purpose of increasing market share for the specialty crops.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs- Promotion of an Organization's Image, Logo or Brand Name	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand rather than eligible specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A promotional campaign to increase sales of "STATE/COUNTY Grown" Watermelon is acceptable while increasing brand awareness of "XYZ Grown" generically is not. • 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 STATE/COUNTY Grown Apples" but not "XYZ Grown", which promotes XYZ generically. • A promotional campaign to increase producer sales of "STATE/COUNTY Grown fruits and vegetables" is acceptable while increasing membership in "STATE/COUNTY Grown" generally is not.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of Non-Specialty Crop Activities	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs for promotion at non-specialty crop specific venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements could say "Buy Sweet Corn! It is the Best!" but not "Buy Local!" • Advertising educational sessions at a conference that solely benefits specialty crop growers are acceptable, while advertising a non-specialty crop specific local food conference is not.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotional Items, Gifts, Prizes, etc.	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for promotional items, swag, gifts, prizes, memorabilia, and souvenirs.</p>

Selling and Marketing Costs – Sponsorships	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with sponsorships. A sponsorship is a form of advertising in which an organization uses grant funds to have its name and/or logo associated with certain events and where the organization does not necessarily know how the funds associated with sponsorship costs will be used. These costs are considered a contribution or donation and only benefit the organization offering funding. This limits the beneficiaries to the sponsor organization, which conflicts with the restriction that projects affect and produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts. Costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (i.e., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) are allowable only if they solely promote the specialty crop rather than promote or benefit a program or single organization.</p> <p>See also Participant Support Costs.</p>
Selling and Marketing Costs – Use of Meeting Rooms, Space, Exhibits for Non-Specialty Crop Activities	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with the use of trade shows, meeting rooms, displays, demonstrations, exhibits, and the rental of space for activities that do not solely promote specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the participation of raspberry and blueberry producers at a non-specialty crop specific international trade show to promote berries to an international audience is allowable, while renting a booth space for berry producers as well as wheat producers at an international trade show is not allowable. • Supporting the participation of farmers’ market managers at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable. • Supporting a portion of a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is not allowable, while supporting a session on specialty crops at a national conference that is not specific to specialty crops is allowable. • Funding an “XYZ State Grown” booth at a specialty crop-specific venue where all exhibitors in the booth are specialty crop producers is allowable, but funding an “XYZ Grown” booth at a non-specialty crop specific venue is not allowable.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Cookbooks, Cooking Demonstrations, Recipe Cards, Food Pairings	<p><i>Allowable</i> for costs promoting the specialty crops in processed products (products prepared or created for the purposes of promoting a specialty crop but that require other ingredients are considered a processed product). A processed product is defined as a product that constitutes greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of separate complementary non-specialty crop products. A separate complementary non-specialty crop product means a product closely associated with a specialty crop product, the purchase of one encouraging consumers to buy the other (i.e., cheese and wine).</p>

<p>Supplies and Materials</p>	<p><i>Allowable</i> for costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies must be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs. Only materials and supplies actually used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<p><i>Allowable</i> when travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, the lowest reasonable commercial airfares must be used.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for government officials per 2 CFR part 200.444. Applicants and subapplicants that do not have formal travel policies and for-profit subapplicants' allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at http://www.gsa.gov. If a applicant or subapplicant organization has no formal travel policy, those regulations will be used to determine the amount that may be charged for travel costs.</p> <p>Applicants and subapplicants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of discount fares for airline travel through advance purchase of tickets if travel schedules can be planned in advance.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the use of alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing if they are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for travel costs for conferences, venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, workshops seminars, etc. that include non-specialty crop activities such as farmers' market annual conferences and general marketing tradeshow where these costs cannot be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: Travel costs for personnel to travel to a farmers' market conference is unallowable, while travel to a vegetable food safety educational session is allowable.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

All applications must contain the applicable elements outlined in the guidelines. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the application is complete prior to submission.

Required Documents

- Signed Acknowledgement
- Proposal Narrative

Proposal Narrative

- Applicant Information with DUNS Number
- Project Title
- Project Partner and Summary
- Priority Area
- Project Purpose with Objectives, Beneficiaries, Work plan
- Expected Measurable Outcomes
- Budget Narrative (Itemized Budget and Narrative)
- External Project Support
- Project Commitment
- Multi-state Projects (if applicable)

Completed application packets must be received by 5:00 p.m. on May 16, 2016. No late applications will be accepted. An electronic version of the application, in Microsoft Word format, is required.

Mail completed applications to:
Susan Head, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
P.O. Box 1609
Jackson, MS 39215
Email: susan@mdac.ms.gov
Phone: (601) 359-1196