INDIANA
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

CY 2023

ISDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Overview

- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Grants Management System
- Application Content

Eligibility

What is a specialty crop?

Specialty crops are defined by USDA as:

» Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Eligible plants must be cultivated or managed and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered specialty crops. Processed products shall consist of greater than 50% of the specialty crop by weight, exclusive of added water.

Questions? Check USDA's list of specialty crops

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

Eligible Crops

Fruits & tree nuts
Vegetables
Culinary herbs & spices
Medicinal herbs

Floriculture & nursery crops
- Christmas trees
- Cut flowers
- Propagative materials
- Etc.

Ineligible Crops

Oil seed crops
Field and grain crops
Forage crops
Fiber crops
- hemp

ISDA Funding Priorities

- Funding Area I: Market Enhancement
- Funding Area II: Access, Education and Training
- Funding Area III: Research

Encouraged Grant Project Areas

1. Enhancing food safety
2. Improving capacity of all entities in specialty crop distribution chain (in compliance with Food Safety Modernization Act)
3. Investing in specialty crop research
4. Developing new or improved seed varieties and specialty crops
5. Pest and disease control
6. Increasing child or adult nutrition knowledge and consumption on specialty crops
7. Improve efficiency and reduce costs of distribution systems
8. Sustainability

Eligible Entities

- For-profits
- Nonprofits
- Local units of government
- Public institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- **ALL** applicants must have a SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier(UEI)

Funds cannot benefit a single organization, institution or individual.

Allowable Costs

Eligible Costs

- Special Purpose Equipment
- Communication Costs
- Travel
- Materials and Supplies
- Meetings and Conferences
- Publication and Printing Costs
- Rental Costs of Buildings and Equipment
- Post-Award Training Costs
- Consultant Services or Subcontractors
- Compensation for Personnel & Fringe

Ineligible Costs

- Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment
- Bad Debts
- Lobbying, Political, Other Government Activities
- Entertainment and Alcohol
- Grantee Tuition
- Contributions to a Contingency Reserve or any Similar Provision
- Fines, Penalties, Damages, & Other Settlements Resulting from Violations
- Organized Fund Raising/Contributions & Donations
- Costs of Investment & Advisory Councils

For comprehensive list, refer to USDA AMS terms and conditions:
https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf

Project Beneficiaries

Beginning Farmers

- An individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

Underserved Farmers

- A farmer/rancher who is a member of an Underserved Group which is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination based on 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.

Veteran Farmers

- A producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof, was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for no more than 10 years or who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

Application Process

Timeline

Wednesday, February 15, 2023	SCBGP proposals open in GMS. Applicants can begin creating their proposals.
Friday, March 10, 2023, no later than **12:00pm ET**	SCBGP proposals must be submitted in GMS. Unsubmitted/late proposals will not be accepted or reviewed.
Friday, March 17, 2023	Applicants receive proposal feedback and can begin revising proposals
Friday, March 24, 2023, no later than **12:00pm ET**	Revised, final proposal must be submitted in GMS. Unsubmitted/late proposals will not be accepted or reviewed.
Mid-April 2023	ISDA notifies successful and unsuccessful applicants.
Monday, May 1, 2023	ISDA submits the State Plan to USDA-AMS.
Late Summer 2023	State grant agreements are prepared and executed; projects can begin.

Grants Management System

Using GMS

To access the portal, use the link on the ISDA Grants and Funding Opportunities page or go directly to https://indianaegms.force.com/Grants/. The Grants Management System ("GMS") is accessible on most common internet browsers; however, it is not compatible with Internet Explorer. ISDA recommends using Chrome, if possible.

To apply, you must first have a system account, which must be requested at https://arcg.is/0ra898.

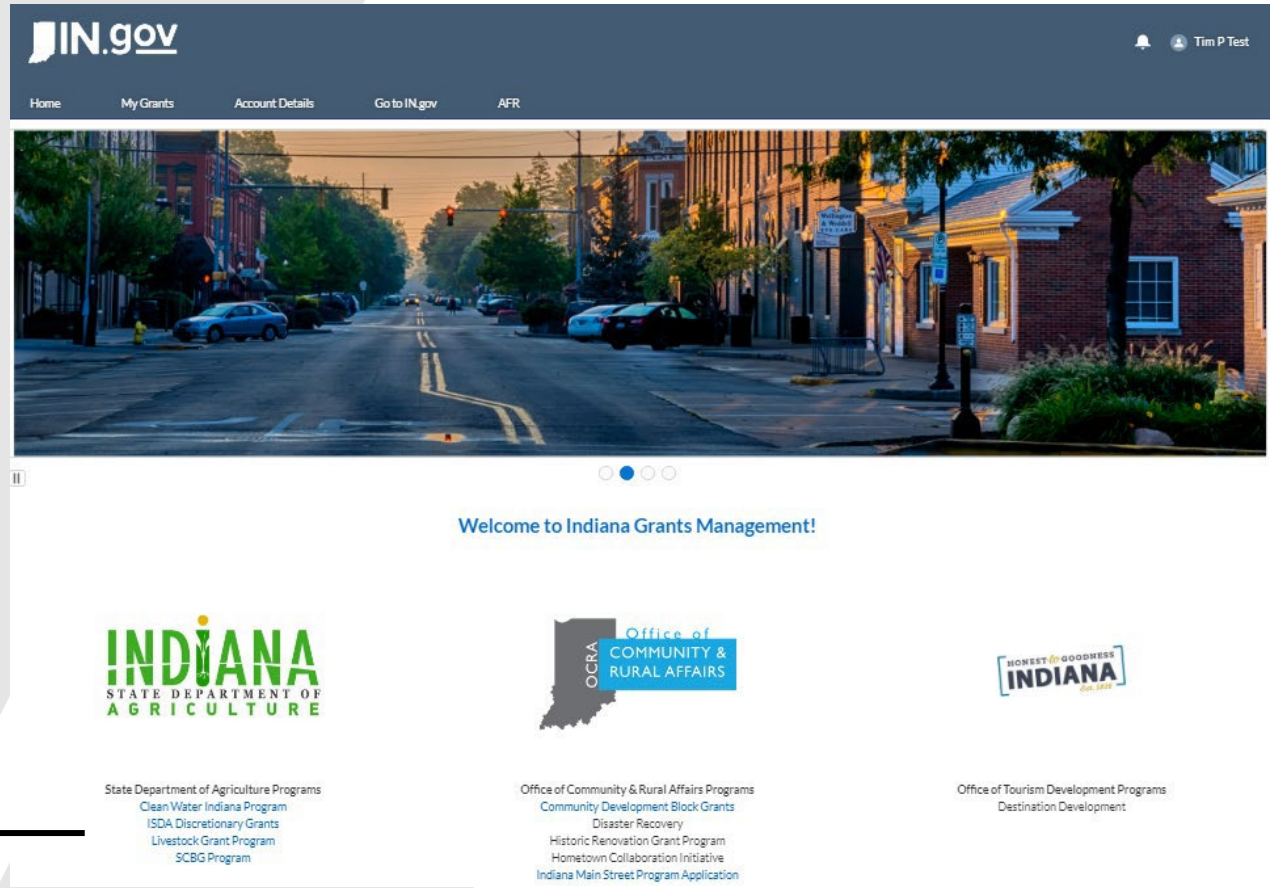
Quick notes for logging into GMS:

1. Request an account at https://arcg.is/0ra898;
2. You will then receive a welcome email from the portal asking you to create a password; then
3. Login to the GMS at https://indianaegms.force.com/Grants/ using your username (email address) and password.

Please contact Leah Harmon, Director of Information Systems, at lharmon2@isda.in.gov or 317-607-4127 for questions/concerns regarding GMS.

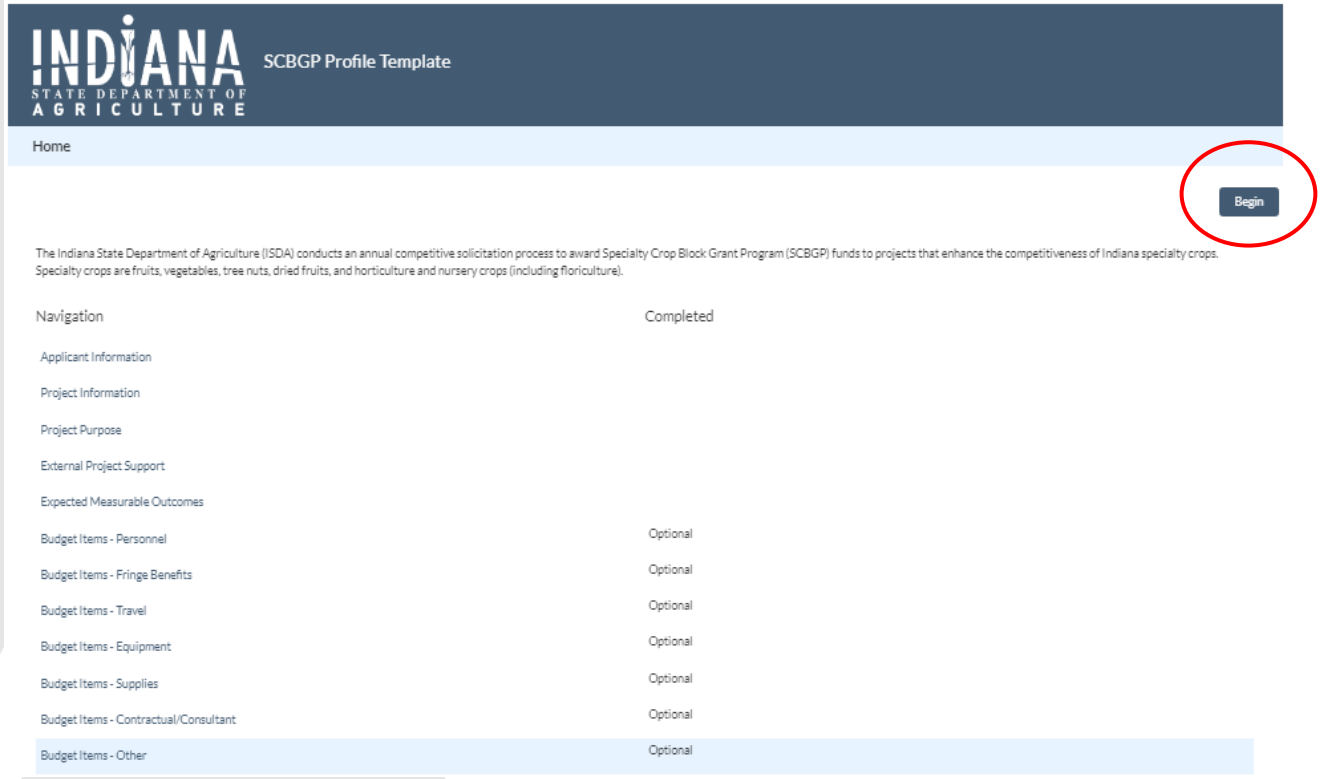
Using GMS- Accessing Specialty Crop Block Grants

Once you have logged into your account, you will be directed to the portal home page. There, you will select the SCBG Grant Program link under ISDA.



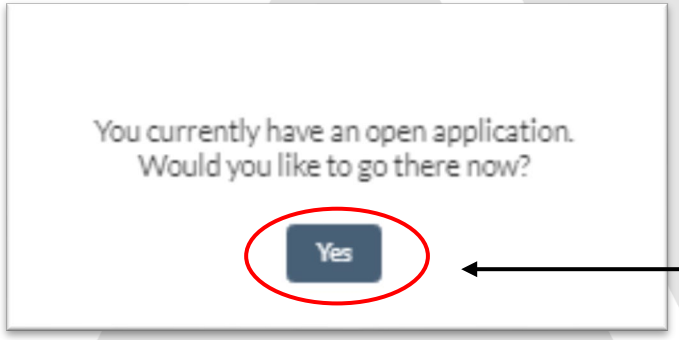
Using GMS- Creating an Application

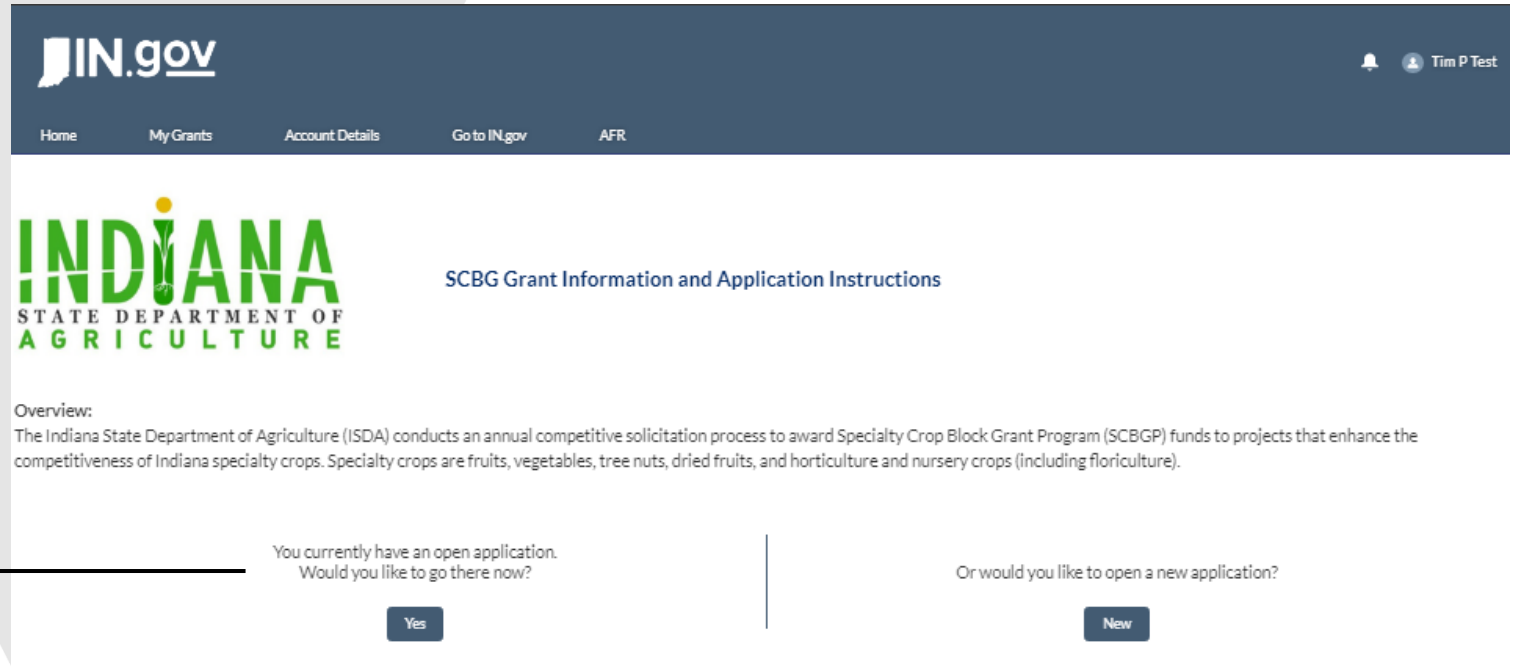
After you click on the SCBG Grant Program link, you will be directed to the landing page to create an application. You will see a blue begin button. Click on it to start a new application.



Using GMS- Resuming an Application in Progress

Applicants can continue to edit and revise their application until it has been submitted. To reopen a started application, applicants should log in to GMS, select ‘SCBG Program’ from the list of ISDA Programs, and when prompted click ‘Yes’ to return to your open application.



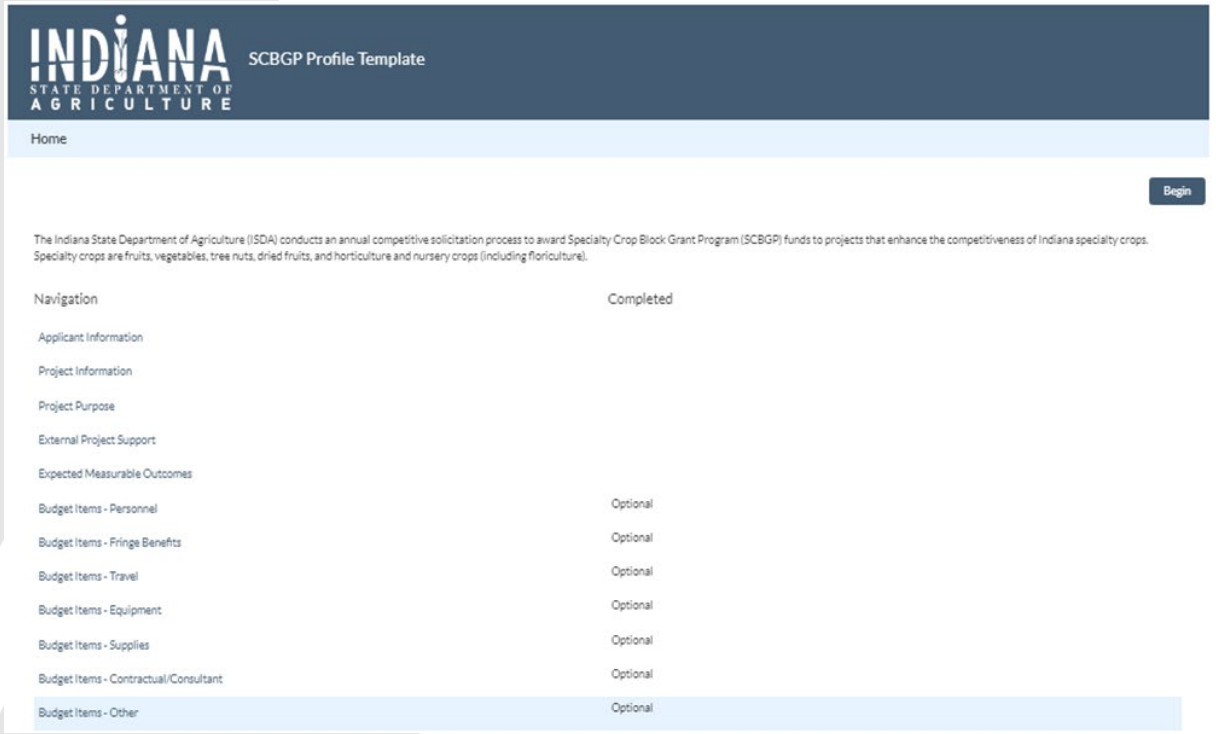


Using GMS- Entering Application Data

The application will guide you through each section and indicates which questions are required and which are optional. GMS will auto-save any information that has been entered. Please note, some fields contain character limits, so it may be necessary to upload supporting documentation to supplement your narrative and justification in the application.

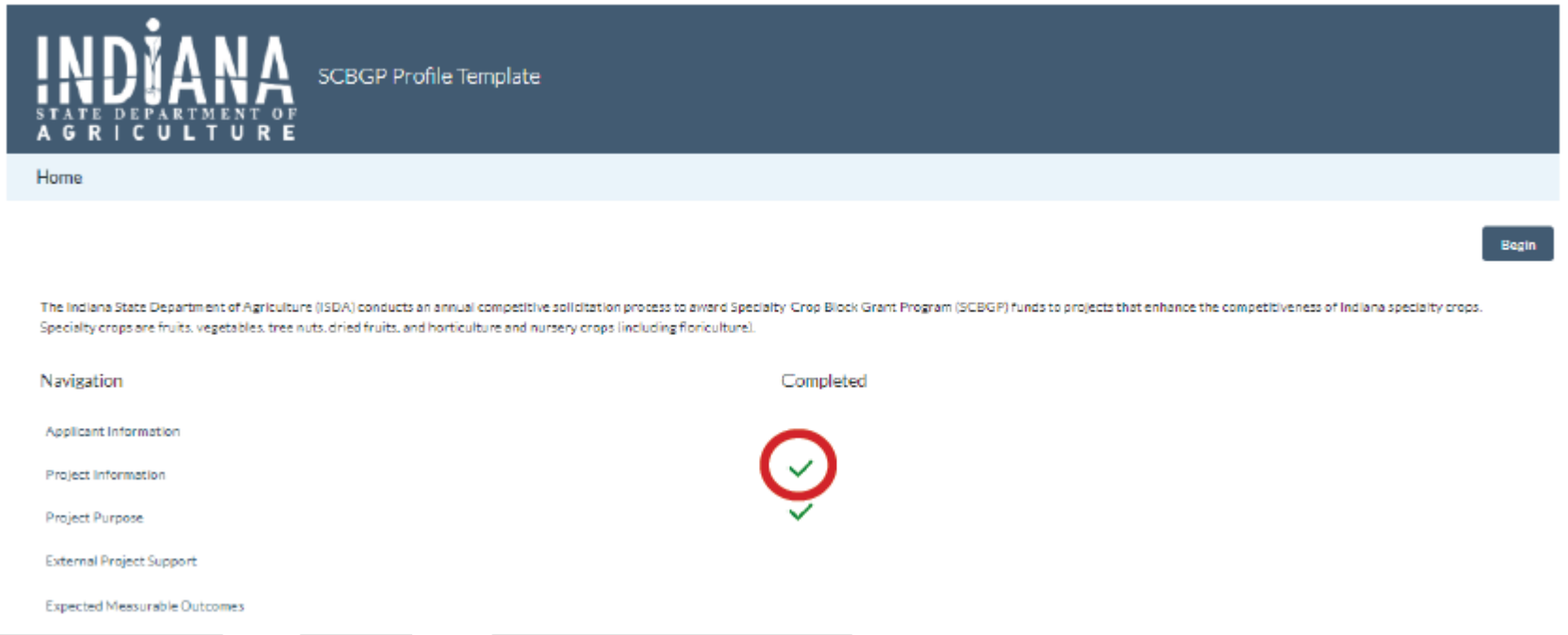
Required Sections

- Applicant information
- Project information
- Project purpose
- External project support
- Expected measurable outcomes
- Budget narrative
- Signature page



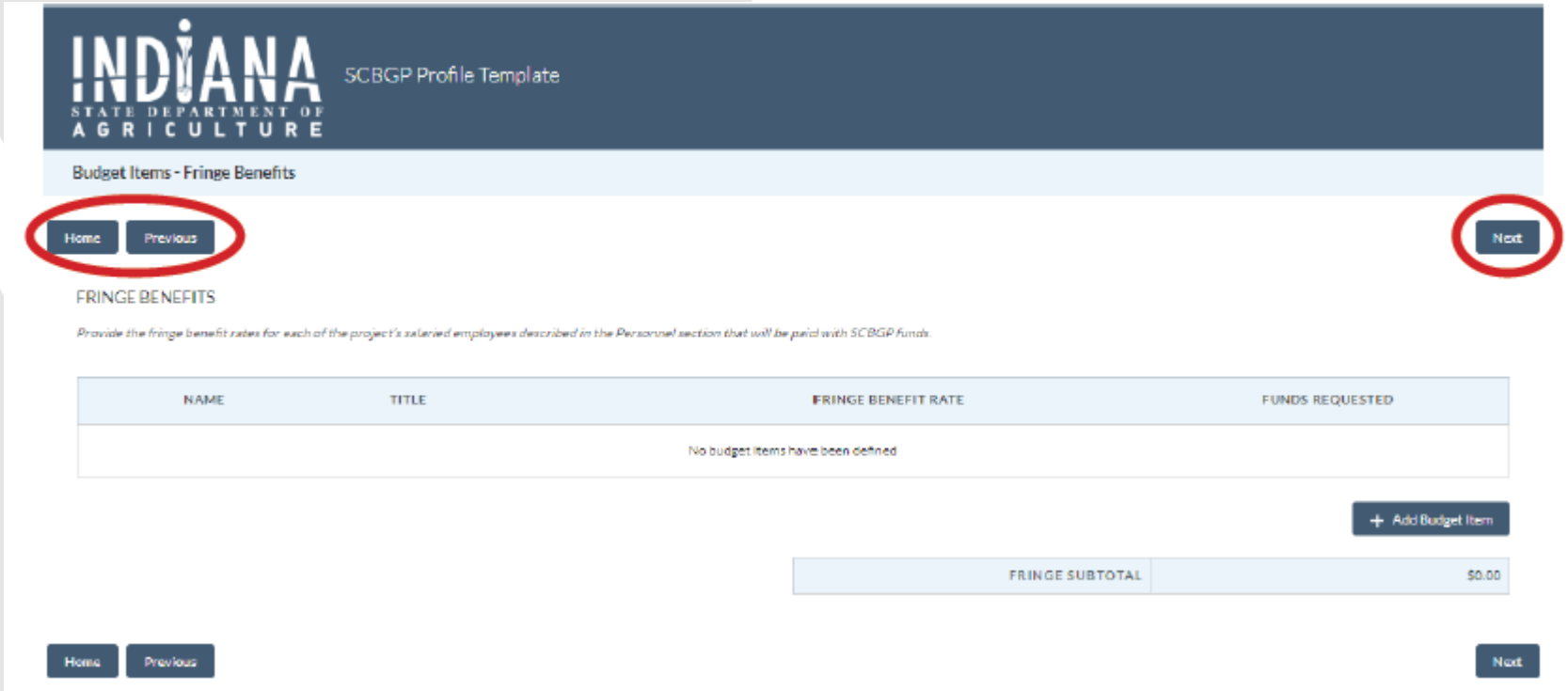
Using GMS- Entering Application Data

Sections may be completed in any order and the application will save as data is entered. When a section has been completed a green check mark will appear in the completed column.



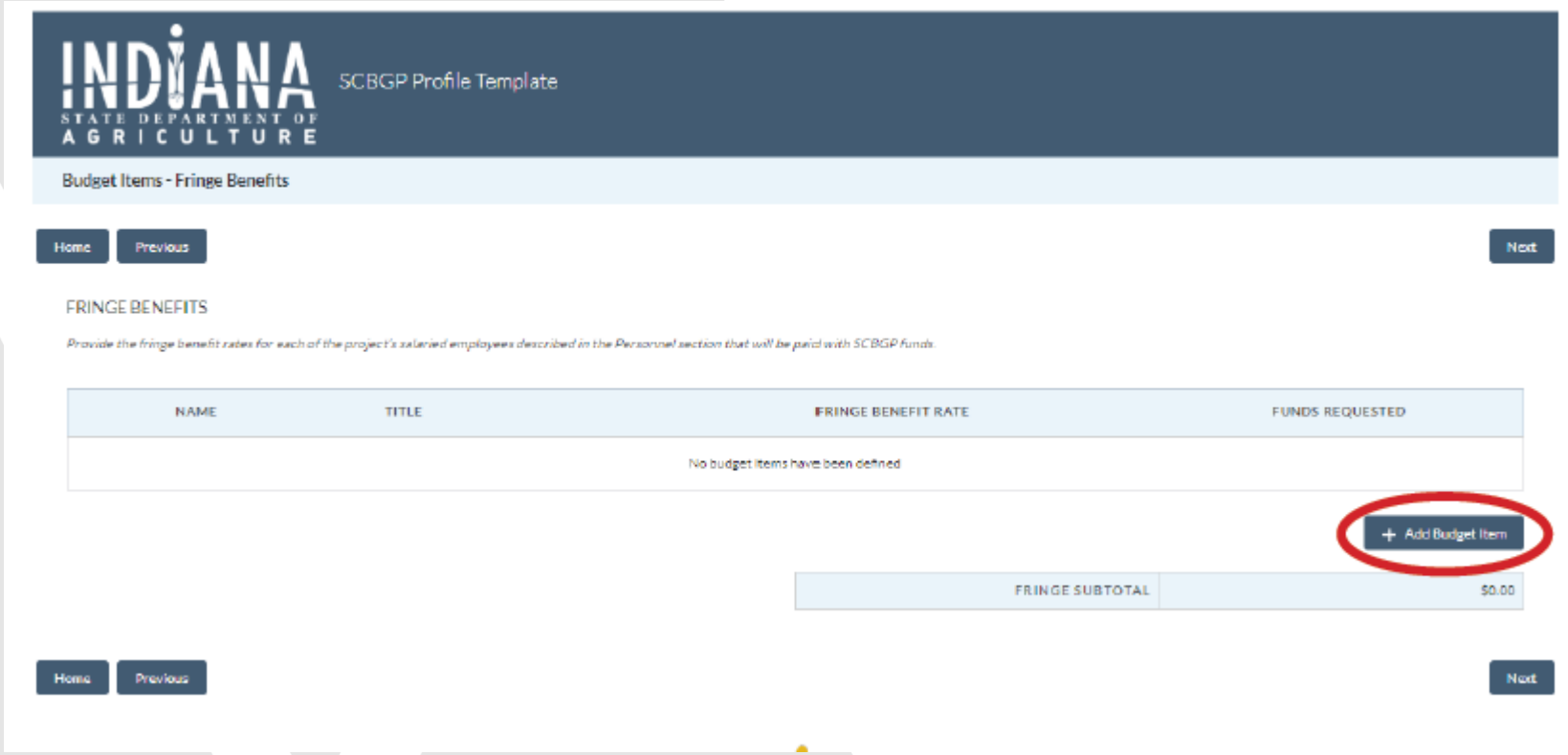
Using GMS - Navigation

To navigate within the application, use the Home, Previous, and Next buttons that appear on both the top and bottom of each screen.



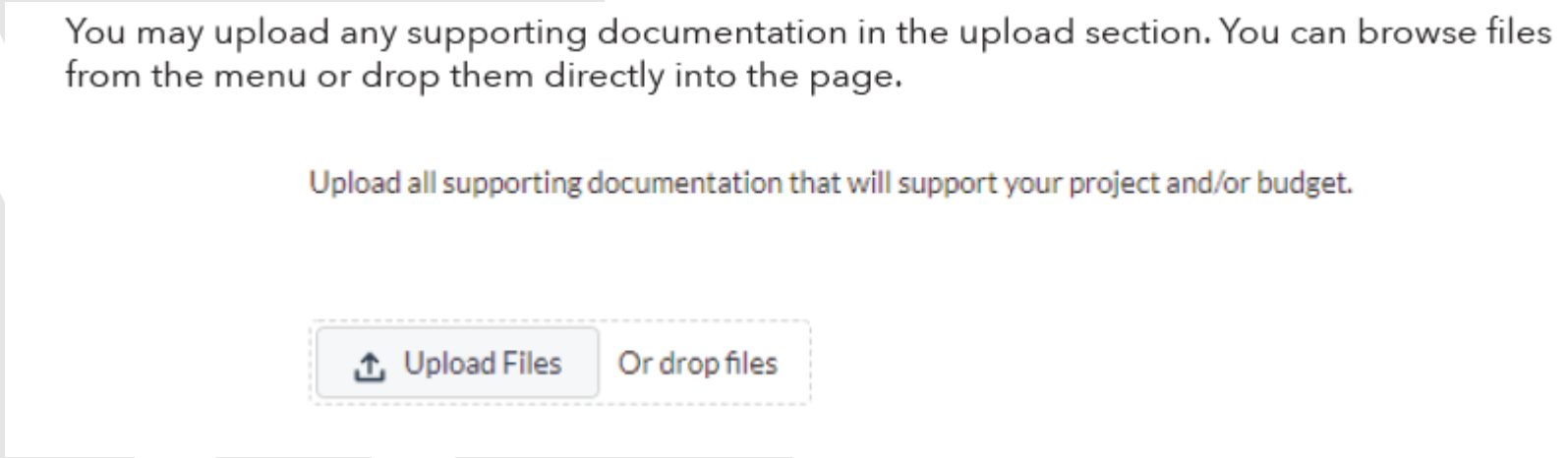
Using GMS – Adding Contacts and Budget Items

In certain sections of the application, you will be prompted to add items. Click on the button to enter information. These buttons appear in the Applicant Information, Project Purpose, and Budget sections.



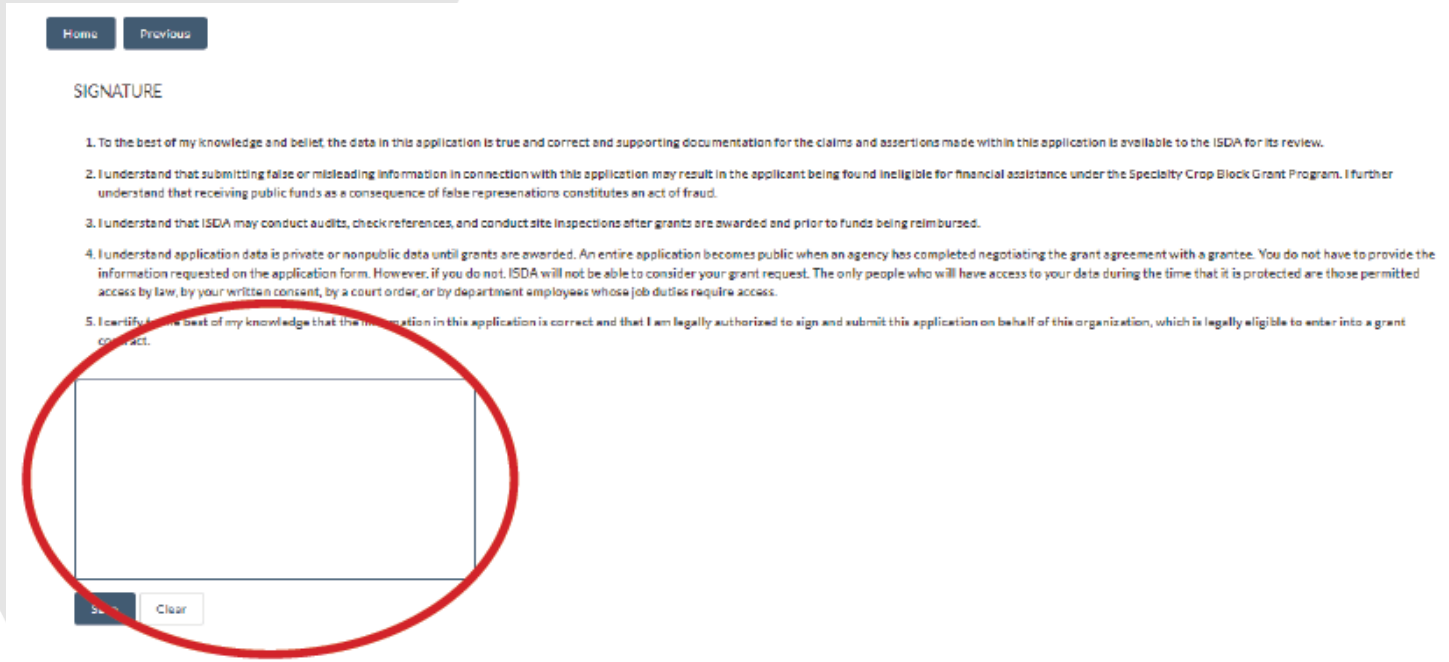
Using GMS – Adding Supporting Documentation

You may upload any supporting documentation in the upload section. You can browse files from the menu or drop them directly into the page.



Using GMS – Signing the Application

Applicants must read the five certification statements and sign the application by using their computer mouse. If using a touch-enabled device, applicants may sign in the box with their finger. After signing, the applicant must save their signature. The applicant may then submit the application. No edits may be made to the application or the file uploads once the application has been successfully submitted.



Submitting Your Application

Detailed instructions for applying are available in the ISDA SCBG Notice of Funding Opportunity CY2023

Proposals must be submitted via GMS **no later than March 10, 2023, by 12:00 p.m. ET**

*Technical support will be available until **5 p.m. on March 10th** .*

Questions? Contact Sherdexia Yarde at syarde@isda.in.gov.

Application Content

SAM.gov

Your organization must be a registered entity in SAM.gov in order to sign grant contracts/agreements and to receive federal funds.

- You will need proof of registration in SAM.gov at the time of proposal
  - Must have a SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), **and**
  - Have active registration in SAM.gov by the final proposal due date

Resources to help you with your SAM.gov registration are available online, and you may reference the YouTube link below to assist with SAM.gov registration.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2t5queourQ

You must also be a registered bidder with the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Supplier Division

- You can check your bidder status or start your bidder registration here

*Final proposals will be due **no later than** 12pm EST on March 24, 2023, and you **MUST** show active registration by March 25th to be considered an eligible applicant.*

Application Content

Project Summary

- Clearly describe the project and need, as well as identify the expected impact and an implementation strategy. If there are project partners (other organizations performing project activities with the lead applicant), make sure the relationship between the applicant and partners is clearly explained.

Project Purpose

- Project issue
  - Clear description of the problem(s) the project intends to address
  - Describes/documents the frequency(number of occurrences) and prevalence(commonness and severity) of issue(s)
- Objectives
  - Make sure you choose objectives that clearly align with the purpose and goals of the project
- Timeline
  - Be sure to provide a timeline breaking down project activities by quarter, per year.
  - Make sure that all work can be completed in a two-year project performance period.

Application Content

Project Purpose

- Sustainability
  - Be ready to describe how the project will be sustained in the long-term, and not indefinitely rely on publicly generated grant funding to continue.
- Outreach to beneficiaries of special classes
  - Your project must be designed to benefit socially disadvantaged farmers, underserved communities, beginning farmers, and/or veteran farmers
    - Clearly explain how the project will benefit the identified class or classes
  - Provide documentation showing the special classes' acknowledgement of and support for the project

Measurable Outcomes

- Be sure to have a at least 1 Outcome and 1 corresponding Indicator for your proposed project, and be ready to justify and explain the selected Outcome(s) and Indicator(s)
- ISDA recommends choosing **no more than** 3 outcomes

Budget Overview

Budget Narrative

- Expenses must fit into established budget categories:
  - Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, and Other
- Provide justification on each category to help demonstrate how grant funds will be used on activities that meet the purpose of the program.
  - Make sure to provide supporting documentation for items such as special equipment (required if applicable), and other items in the budget as needed.
  - Clearly describe the need for all line items outlined in the budget narrative

Graduate tuition or fee remission will not be accepted as eligible budget items.

Budget Categories

Personnel

- Persons employed by the grantee organization with SCBG funds should be listed in this category.
- Those employed elsewhere would be listed as subcontractors or consultants in the “CONTRACTUAL” category.
- **Duties must directly relate to the project plan.**
- Indicate their title, percent of full-time equivalents (FTE), and corresponding salary.

Travel

- Be specific: include destination, purpose of trip, number of trips, number of people traveling, number of days traveling, est. airfare costs, est. ground transportation costs, est. lodging and meal costs, and total est. mileage costs.
- Note specific GSA travel and per diem rates for Indiana - GSA.gov Per Diem Rates.
- Use the State mileage rate - https://www.in.gov/idoa/files/Mileage_Rate_-_June_2022.pdf.pdf
- Use the State reimbursement rates for things like airports, parking, etc.
- Travel must be the least expensive mode available.

Budget Categories

Equipment

- General equipment **purchases** are **unallowable**. This includes lease-to-own and rent-to-own agreements. General equipment may be allowable if it is rented or leased for a period not to exceed the term of the grant, and only when prior approval has been given by ISDA and/or USDA.
- Special purpose equipment is only allowable if
    1. Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement
    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 be used solely to meet the purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement
    6. Must not use special purpose equipment acquired to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services
    7. Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable
- Keep in mind that expenditures for equipment **less than $5,000 per unit** are considered "**supplies**".

Budget Categories

Supplies

- All tangible personal property that does not qualify as equipment are considered supplies. These may include supplies such as office, educational or lab supplies.
- For non-typical materials/supply items, include a brief narrative on how it aligns with the project.
- Provide an itemized list and estimate the dollar amount for each item.
- Items such as long-distance charges, postage, fax and express mail are more appropriately listed under the “OTHER” category.

Contractors

- Contractual/consultant costs are 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 and justified separately.

Other

May include:

- Conference/meeting hosting costs
- Communication/publication costs
- Speaker/trainer fees
- Data collection

Applicants may not request any indirect costs, regardless of the applicant’s indirect cost rate agreement.

Budget Categories

Program Income

May be:

- The sale of commodities or items procured under an award
- Registration fees for conferences or seminars

Be sure to:

- Indicate the nature or source of program income (e.g., registration fees).
- Estimate the amount of program income anticipated.
- Describe how the income will be used to further enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Please note that you are budgeting for the estimated revenue in the program income section

Budget Tips

Budget Tips

- Justify how contractual costs were determined/will be procured. Include all quotes as attachments.
- Justify high fringe rates, but keep in mind excessively high fringe rates are not allowable.
- If your proposal generates program income, explain how this income will be re-invested solely and during the project's term for activities directly related to the project.

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