

CY 2023

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# ISDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

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# Overview

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- 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	Floriculture & nursery crops
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christmas trees</li> <li>• Cut flowers</li> <li>• Propagative materials</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
Culinary herbs & spices	
Medicinal herbs	

## Ineligible Crops

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

# ISDA Funding Priorities

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Funding Area I: Market  
Enhancement



Funding Area II: Access,  
Education and Training



Funding Area III: Research



# Encouraged Grant Project Areas

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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

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- 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](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf)



# Project Beneficiaries

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## 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 <b>12:00pm ET</b>	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 <b>12:00pm ET</b>	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

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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/Ora898>.

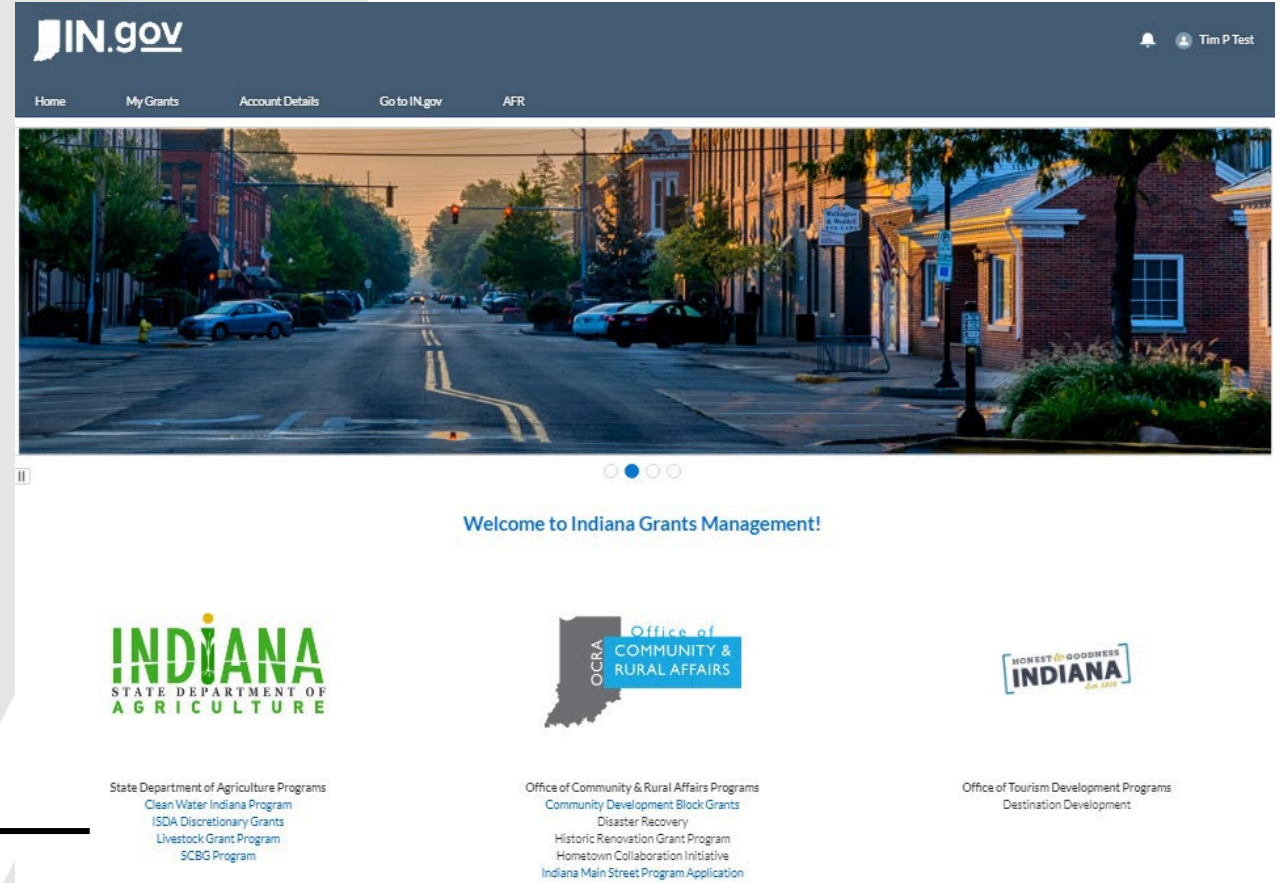
Quick notes for logging into GMS:

1. Request an account at <https://arcg.is/Ora898>;
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](mailto:lharmon2@isda.in.gov) or 317-607-4127 for questions/concerns regarding GMS.

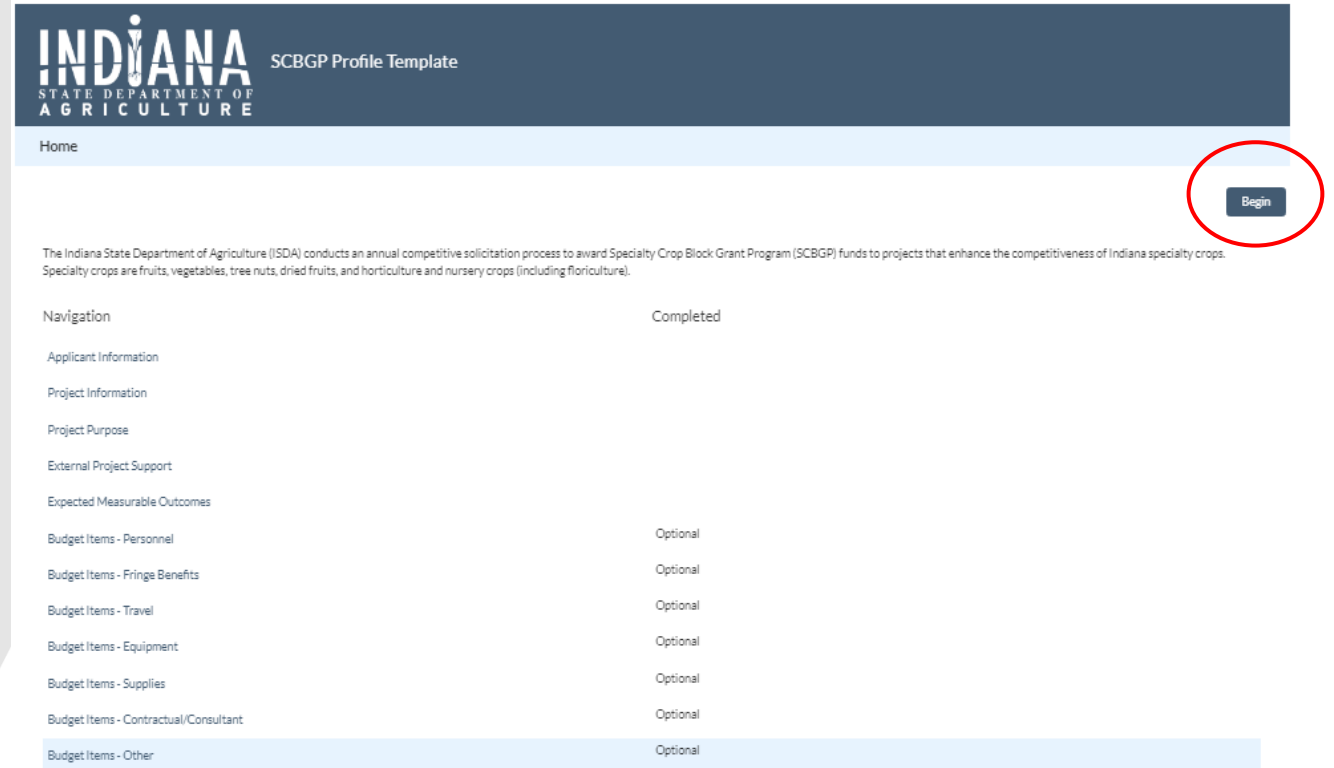
# Using GMS- Accessing Specialty Crop Block Grants

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.



The screenshot shows the 'SCBG Profile Template' landing page. At the top left is the Indiana State Department of Agriculture logo. The page title is 'SCBG Profile Template'. Below the header is a navigation bar with a 'Home' link. A blue 'Begin' button is circled in red in the top right corner. The main content area contains a paragraph about the annual competitive solicitation process. Below this is a progress indicator table with two columns: 'Navigation' and 'Completed'. The 'Navigation' column lists various application steps, and the 'Completed' column shows their status. The 'Budget Items - Other' row is highlighted in light blue.

Navigation	Completed
Applicant Information	
Project Information	
Project Purpose	
External Project Support	
Expected Measurable Outcomes	
Budget Items - Personnel	Optional
Budget Items - Fringe Benefits	Optional
Budget Items - Travel	Optional
Budget Items - Equipment	Optional
Budget Items - Supplies	Optional
Budget Items - Contractual/Consultant	Optional
Budget Items - Other	Optional

# 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.

The screenshot displays the IN.gov website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'IN.gov', 'Home', 'My Grants', 'Account Details', 'Go to IN.gov', and 'AFR'. The user is identified as 'Tim P Test'. The main content area features the Indiana State Department of Agriculture logo and the title 'SCBG Grant Information and Application Instructions'. Below this, an 'Overview' section provides details about the annual competitive solicitation process for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). A notification box is overlaid on the page, containing the text: 'You currently have an open application. Would you like to go there now?' with a 'Yes' button circled in red. An arrow points from this button to a larger, magnified version of the same notification box on the left side of the image. At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: 'Yes' and 'New'.

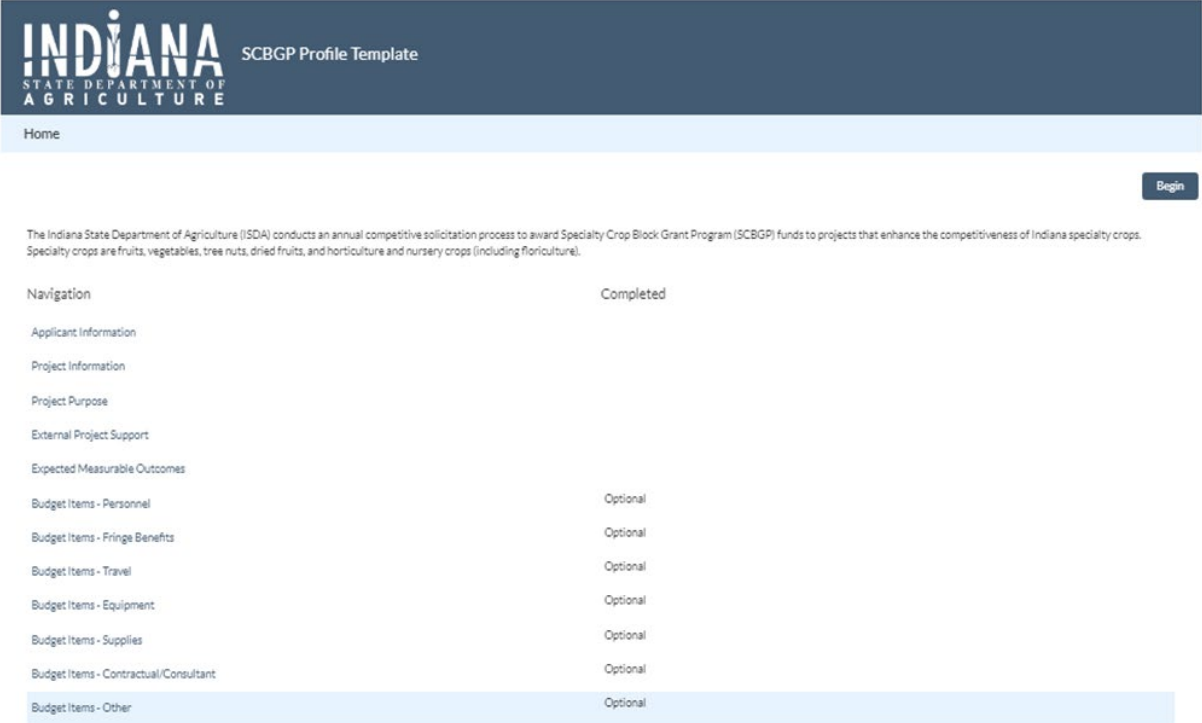


# Using GMS- Entering Application Data

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

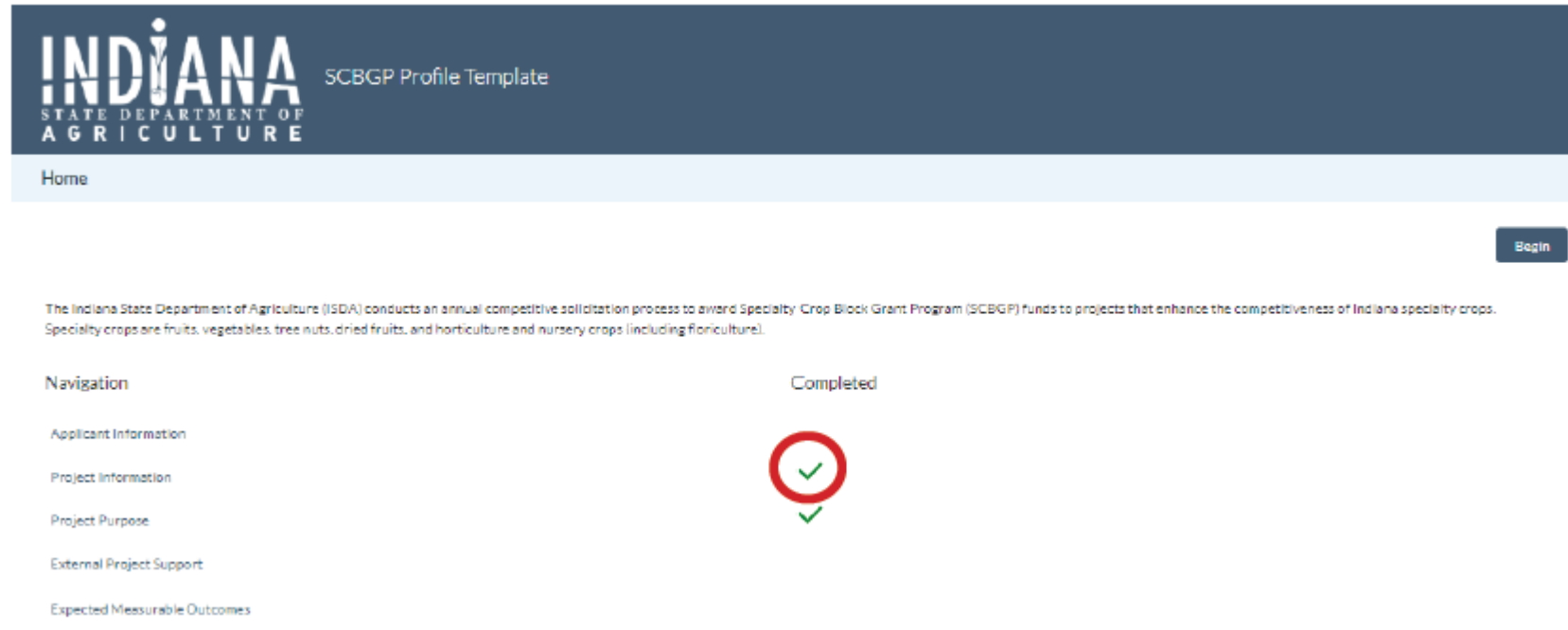


The screenshot shows the 'INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SCBGP Profile Template' interface. It includes a 'Home' link, a 'Begin' button, and a paragraph of introductory text. Below this is a 'Navigation' table with a 'Completed' status indicator on the right.

Navigation	Completed
Applicant Information	
Project Information	
Project Purpose	
External Project Support	
Expected Measurable Outcomes	
Budget Items - Personnel	Optional
Budget Items - Fringe Benefits	Optional
Budget Items - Travel	Optional
Budget Items - Equipment	Optional
Budget Items - Supplies	Optional
Budget Items - Contractual/Consultant	Optional
Budget Items - Other	Optional

# Using GMS- Entering Application Data

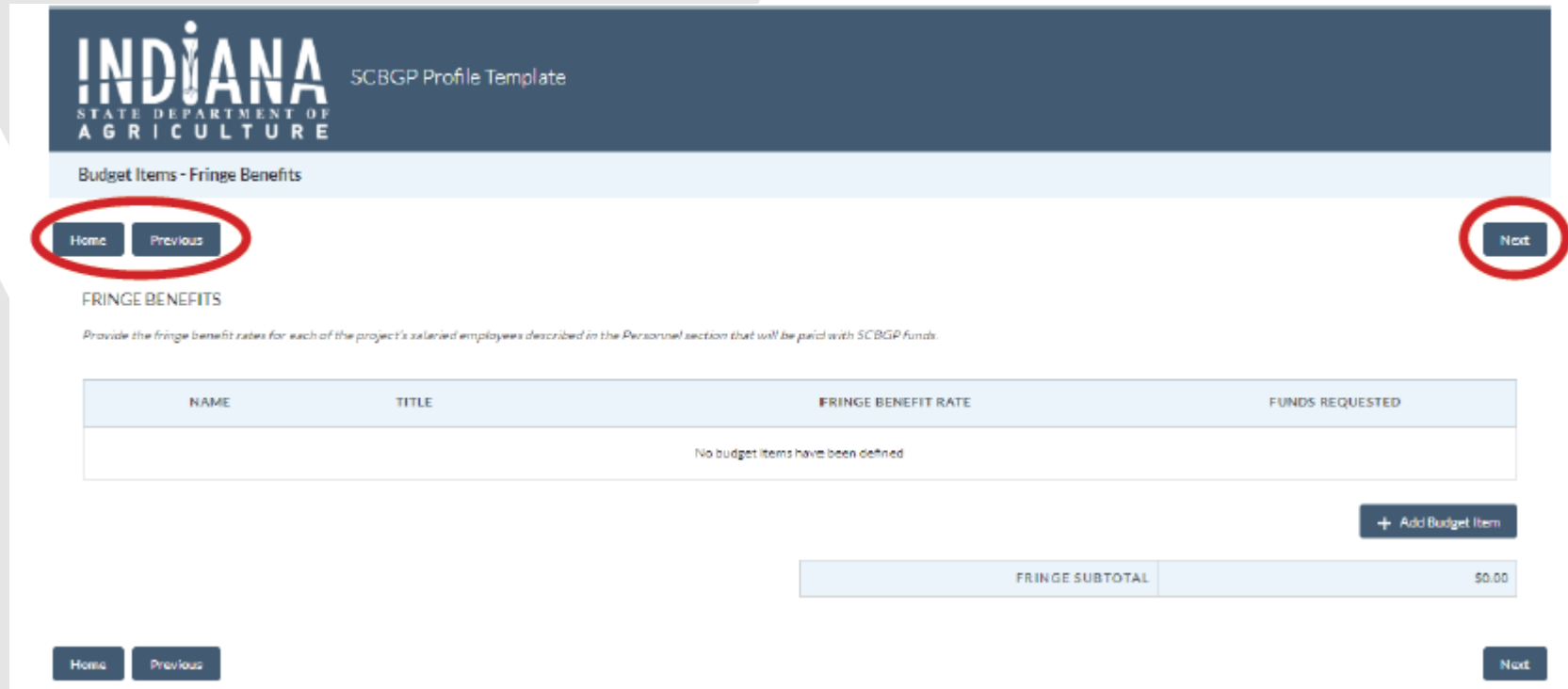
Sections may be completed in any order and the application will save as data is entered. When a section has been completed a green check mark will appear in the completed column.



The screenshot shows the 'INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SCBGP Profile Template' application. It features a navigation menu on the left with the following items: Home, Applicant Information, Project Information, Project Purpose, External Project Support, and Expected Measurable Outcomes. A 'Begin' button is located in the top right corner. A 'Completed' column is visible, containing a red circle with a green checkmark, indicating that the 'Project Information' section has been completed. Below the navigation menu, there is a paragraph of text: 'The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) conducts an annual competitive solicitation process to award Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds to projects that enhance the competitiveness of Indiana specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture).'

# 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.



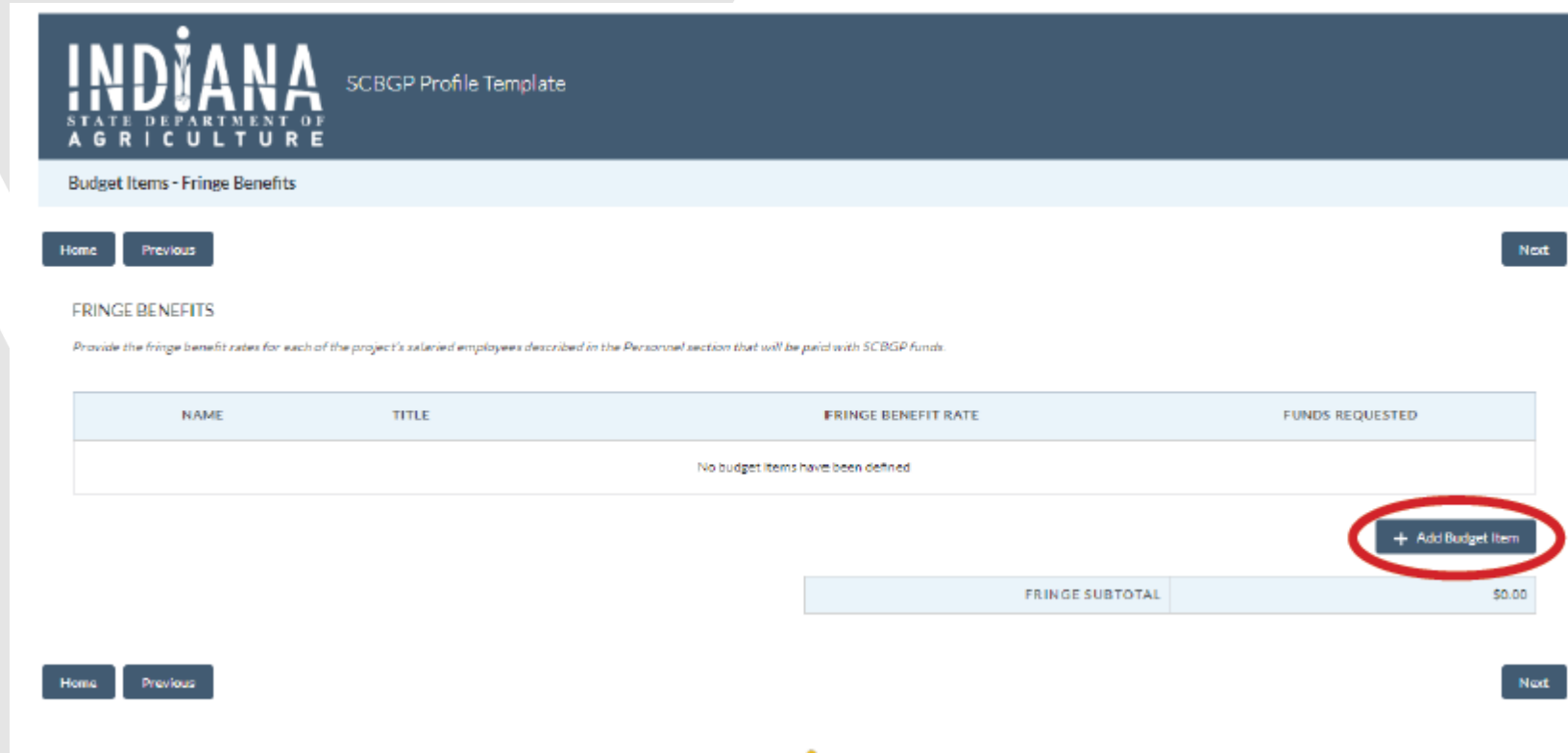
The screenshot displays the 'INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SCBGP Profile Template' interface. At the top, the title 'Budget Items - Fringe Benefits' is shown. Below this, there are navigation buttons for 'Home', 'Previous', and 'Next'. The 'Home', 'Previous', and 'Next' buttons are circled in red. The main content area is titled 'FRINGE BENEFITS' and includes a sub-header: 'Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBGP funds.' Below this is a table with the following structure:

NAME	TITLE	FRINGE BENEFIT RATE	FUNDS REQUESTED
No budget items have been defined			

At the bottom right of the table area, there is a '+ Add Budget Item' button. Below the table, a summary row shows 'FRINGE SUBTOTAL' with a value of '\$0.00'. At the bottom of the screen, there are additional navigation buttons for 'Home', 'Previous', and 'Next'.

# 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.



INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SCBGP Profile Template

Budget Items - Fringe Benefits

Home Previous Next

FRINGE BENEFITS

*Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBGP funds.*

NAME	TITLE	FRINGE BENEFIT RATE	FUNDS REQUESTED
No budget items have been defined			

+ Add Budget Item

FRINGE SUBTOTAL \$0.00

Home Previous Next

# 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.

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

Upload all supporting documentation that will support your project and/or budget.

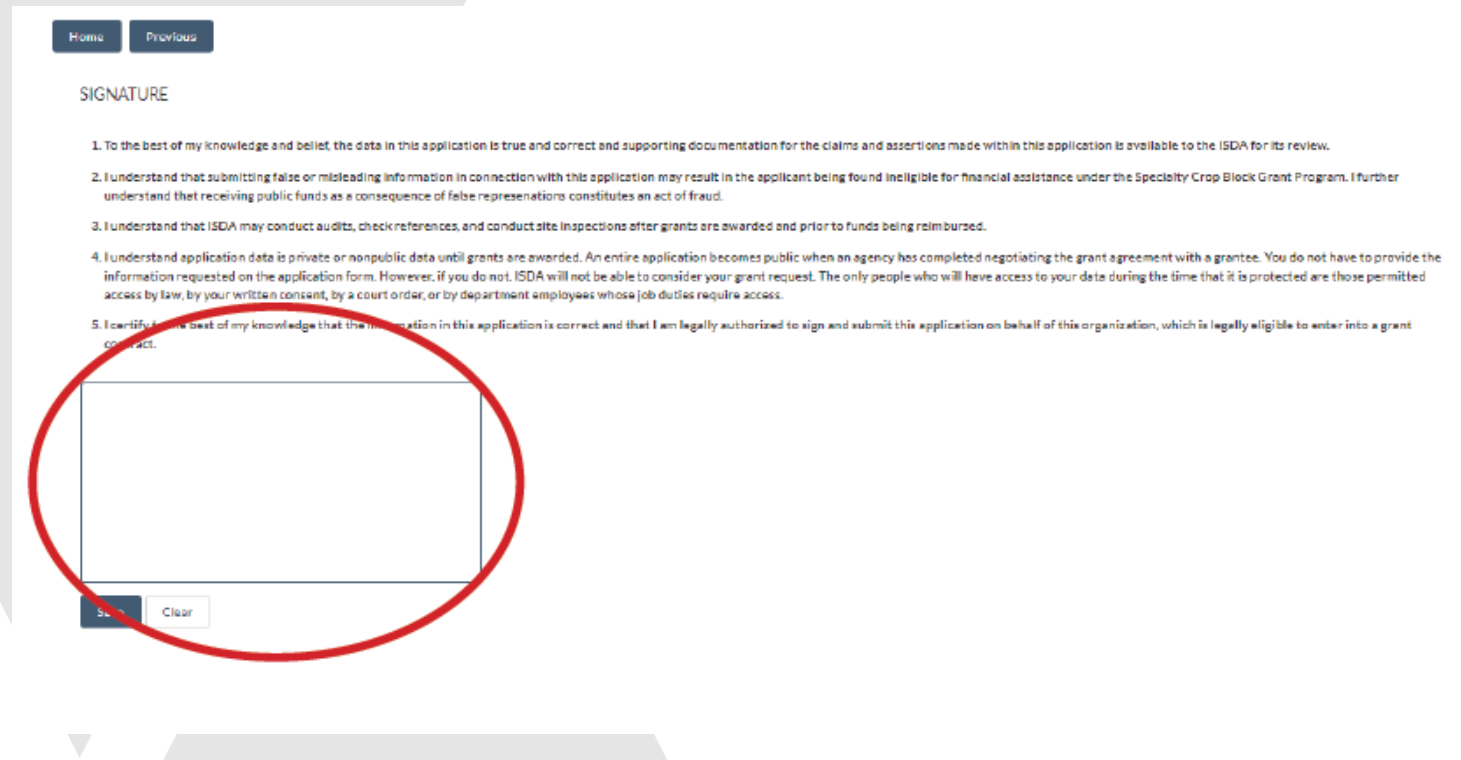


Upload Files

Or drop files

# 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.



The screenshot shows a web interface for signing an application. At the top, there are two buttons: "Home" and "Previous". Below them is the heading "SIGNATURE".

1. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application is true and correct and supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the ISDA for its review.
2. I understand that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application may result in the applicant being found ineligible for financial assistance under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. I further understand that receiving public funds as a consequence of false representations constitutes an act of fraud.
3. I understand that ISDA may conduct audits, check references, and conduct site inspections after grants are awarded and prior to funds being reimbursed.
4. I understand application data is private or nonpublic data until grants are awarded. An entire application becomes public when an agency has completed negotiating the grant agreement with a grantee. You do not have to provide the information requested on the application form. However, if you do not, ISDA will not be able to consider your grant request. The only people who will have access to your data during the time that it is protected are those permitted access by law, by your written consent, by a court order, or by department employees whose job duties require access.
5. I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information in this application is correct and that I am legally authorized to sign and submit this application on behalf of this organization, which is legally eligible to enter into a grant contract.

Below the list of statements is a large, empty rectangular box for the signature, which is circled in red. At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: "Submit" and "Clear".

# Submitting Your Application

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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 10<sup>th</sup>.*

Questions? Contact Sherdexia Yarde at [syarde@isda.in.gov](mailto:syarde@isda.in.gov).

# Application Content



Your organization must be a registered entity in [SAM.gov](https://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 25<sup>th</sup> to be considered an eligible applicant.*

# Application Content

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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](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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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.



# Sherdexia Yarde

*Economic Development Operations Specialist*

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