



Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) SPECIALITY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose

On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to State departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Public Law 110-246 (the Farm Bill) amended the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and authorized the USDA to provide grants to States for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012 to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Section 701 of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extends the Farm Bill for one year until September 30, 2013. State departments of agriculture are eligible to apply and are encouraged to involve industry groups, academia, and community-based organizations in the development of applications. Funding is contingent upon available funding from the United State Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS).

Therefore, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is looking for project proposals from the specialty crop industry in Indiana to present to USDA for funding. The proposals must be solely focused on enhancing specialty crops throughout the state of Indiana. Visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgbp> for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible specialty crops.

Eligibility

Commissions, public entities, associations, and/or nonprofit organizations that represent specialty crops as defined by USDA in Indiana agriculture are eligible to apply (as specified in the criteria section of this program guidance on page 3). Applicants must be a legal entity and have the legal capacity to contract. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Types of Grants and Eligible Activities

Grants can be used solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry: increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in 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; enhancing food safety; developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; pest and disease control through biotechnology; and development of organic and sustainable production practices. Please note that funds can not be used for any capital expenditures such as buildings, land, equipment (tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5000), fringe benefits, grant administrative or indirect costs.

The following guidelines demonstrate the ranking that will be used on all applications:

Proposal shows promise to Increase Sales and/or improve access. (Volume, price, market share)

Proposal seeks to develop/enhance new and emerging markets

Project addresses a challenge of the industry and adds to its overall marketing/distribution strategy.

Project is attainable and innovative.

Project has support of the industry sector.

Proposal clearly defines goals, key steps and timelines for project.

Project can leverage grant dollars from outside funding sources.

Project can be accomplished in 1 year time frame.

Yes- 10 points

No- 0 points

Total Score out of 90

Range of Grant Funding Requests

Minimum - \$10,000 Maximum - \$70,000

Timeline

April 2014 – Announcement of grant program

May 19, 2014 – Applications due to ISDA

May 20-30, 2014– Internal ISDA review and recommendation

June 1-10, 2014—Committee review and scoring

June 11-20, 2014—ISDA Director review and final approval

July 1, 2014 – Submit full application for SCBG by ISDA

September 30, 2014 – Awards announced *

December 2014 – Contracts issued *

January 1, 2015 – Projects may commence once contract is signed by both parties.

December 31, 2015 – Project work must be completed

**Estimated only, actual timeline will depend on USDA.*

Award Process of Payments

Awarded SCBGP grantees will receive reimbursement of expenses when documentation and after site visits are conducted on a quarterly basis.

DUNS NUMBER REQUIREMENT

All applicants must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Central Contract Registration (CCR). DUNS can be obtained at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> and CCR's at <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx> No entity may receive a Specialty Crop Block Grant unless the entity has provided a DUNS number.

E-Verify Requirement

Public Law 111-253 added Indiana Code Section 22-5-1.7 regarding the employment of unauthorized aliens. This new section to the Indiana Code requires state agencies to not only confirm the employment eligibility of their own staff, but to also require contractors and grantees in certain instances to also confirm the employment eligibility of their employees after June 30, 2011.

Employment eligibility is confirmed through the E-Verify program. E-Verify is part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-208) and is administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security (USDHS). The USDHS works with the Social Security Administration to verify the identity and eligibility of employees. E-Verify is free to use, but employers must register with the USDHS to access the system. The federal government already requires all their contractors to participate in E-Verify, and many other states are following suit.

The new Indiana law requires that all state agencies, political subdivisions, business entities with a contract for services with the state or political subdivision, and business entities receiving grants in excess of \$1,000 from the state or a political subdivision enroll and participate in the E-Verify program and must affirm that they do not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien. Additionally, contractors must verify that their subcontractors are participating in E-Verify and do not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien.

Each grant or contract will contain a newly drafted E-Verify clause informing Grantees and Contractors of this requirement. However, we strongly encourage mention of this requirement in your request for proposals or applications. Failure to provide documentation of enrollment in E-Verify will result in deobligation of the award. Each Grantee or Contractor should enroll in E-Verify, after July 1, 2011 submitting each of their new hires into the system to verify their employment eligibility, and should also place the required E-Verify poster in their workplace. To learn more about E-Verify and to enroll, grantees or contractors should visit: <https://e-verify.uscis.gov/enroll/> or www.dhs.gov/e-verify .

Contract Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to execute a grant contract, and no work under this grant may begin before the contract is fully executed. Contracts will specify milestones, outcomes, deliverables and a payment schedule for these deliverables. Awardees must submit a report on a quarterly basis and a final report following the completion of the project. We should note that significant emphasis is being placed on timely reports. In short, extensions have become pervasive in recent years and will be minimized

significantly going forward. Funds will be released to the grantee quarterly, after ISDA receives the report documenting expenditure of the grant funds.

Project Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by ISDA staff and by an advisory committee established by ISDA. Using the recommendations of both parties, applications will be submitted to ISDA's Director, who will make the final determination.

Criteria for Selection

- Project has clear identifiable goals and demonstrates tangible benefits for the industry segment and for Indiana's overall food and agriculture economy.
- Proposal seeks to develop/enhance new and emerging markets. This priority was identified in January 2014 through a survey sent to individuals and entities with a vested interest in Indiana Specialty Crop production, research and promotion.
- Project increases the sales of Indiana grown or manufactured food and agriculture products, including:
 - Increasing the volume of products sold
 - Increasing the price of products sold
 - Increasing the market share of products sold

Please note that the size of the industry will be taken into consideration. For example, a \$10,000 increase in sales could have a more significant impact in a smaller industry than a larger one.

- Project addresses a challenge or opportunity, fits into the overall marketing plan of the industry sector, and adds to its overall marketing strategy.
- Project has clear criteria by which to evaluate the success of the project. Goals and expected outcomes are verifiable, measurable and realistic for the scope of the project.
- Project has a high probability of achieving its goals.
- Project has strong industry support.
- Project will benefit many companies in the industry sector.
- Projects that leverage grant dollars with outside funding will receive priority.
- Project must fall under one or more of the Eligible Specialty Crops listed below.

Algae	Hops
Chickpeas	Kava
Christmas trees	Lavender
Cocoa	Lentils
Coffee	Maple syrup
Cut flowers	Mushrooms
Dry edible beans	Peppermint
Dry peas	Potatoes
Foliage	Seaweed
Fruit grapes for wine	Spearmint
Garlic	Sweet Corn
Ginger root	Vanilla
Ginseng	Vegetable seeds
Herbs	
Honey	

In addition, the following crops are eligible: Commonly recognized fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Application Process

Applications must be submitted via e-mail no later than 4 pm EST on May 19, 2014. The emailed version of the application must be in Microsoft Word format. Applications are to be sent to:

Jennifer Pinkston
Indiana State Department of Agriculture
Grants Coordinator
jpinkston@isda.in.gov

Questions about the application process or the specialty crop block grant program should be directed to the following individuals:

Jennifer Pinkston
Indiana State Department of Agriculture
Grants Coordinator
jpinkston@isda.in.gov

Jill Pritchard
Indiana State Department of Agriculture
Program Manager-Diversified
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