



2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)

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WELCOME!

Today's agenda.

- Program overview
 - Application overview
 - Q&A
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- Please mute yourself if not talking.
 - Please feel free to type in questions in the chat.
 - Please wait until the end of the presentation if you want to unmute to ask questions.



WHAT ARE SPECIALTY CROPS?

- The USDA defines specialty crops 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.
- For a comprehensive list visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp>



WHAT ARE NOT SPECIALTY CROPS?

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

Some crops have eligible and ineligible uses but are listed as ineligible:

- *Some examples included are but not limited to: Sunflower, Hemp, Peanut, Amaranth, Rice, Oats, Wheat, Rye, Sugar Beets, Flaxseed*



SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS

Purpose:

To enhance the competitiveness of Wisconsin's specialty crop industries

You must be able to describe how your project will accomplish this and then measure it during the life of the project.



FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Environmental sustainability, pest and disease control, & varietal improvement
- Development of food safety practices that assist with compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) certification
- Increasing the demand for and supply of Wisconsin specialty crops
- Industry innovation in production, processing, and packaging
- Education for producers, processors, and the general public to increase production, sales, or consumption of Wisconsin specialty crops



FUNDING AMOUNTS

- Minimum: \$10,000
- Maximum: \$100,000



ELIGIBILITY

- Project **must** enhance the competitiveness of Wisconsin-grown **specialty crops**
- Project cannot benefit a single organization, institution, or individual
- Projects must include a plan to disseminate project results
- Entities:
 - Non-Profit and For-Profit
 - Universities
 - Local, State, Federal Government



GRANT TIMEFRAME

Description	Date
Grant proposals due	February 27, 2024
Review grant proposals	March-April
Award determinations and revisions	April
Submit proposals to USDA	May
USDA reviews and approves	August/September
Announce funding/projects begin	October/November
Projects end	June 30, 2027



WRITING YOUR PROPOSAL



IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

- Project need – how relevant and critical is your project?
- Impact of your project - it must benefit more than the applicant. The greater the results are shared and the more that other Wisconsin specialty crop producers, markets, consumers, etc. benefit the better.
 - If impact is small, try to think about how to enhance or amplify it?
- Don't overclaim or take on too much if it makes the project sound like it will not be feasible. What is the likelihood the project will be achieved?
- Has this been done before? Is it new? Or a variation? Or new to your area?



PROJECT IDEAS TO AVOID

- Small scale pilot projects
- Feasibility studies
- Website/social media campaigns
- Projects with too much budget benefiting a single entity or private entity



APPLICATION FORMAT

- Online application can be found at:
 - [DATCP Home Specialty Crop Block Grants \(wi.gov\)](#)
 - OR by visiting <http://datcp.wi.gov> and searching Specialty Crop Block Grant
- Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 27 2024
- Application should not exceed 10 pages (not including letters of support)



APPLICATION COVER SHEET

- Must completely fill out this page
 - Name of applicant is usually business or organization name.
 - Industry sector or specialty crop targeted – provide your own answer
 - Total grant amount requested
 - UEI (Unique Entity ID) – register for this at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) – It is ALWAYS FREE.
 - Identify what funding priority/priorities addressed with grant
 - Project activities taking place. *If you select other, please type in your activity category*



PROJECT SUMMARY

- One sentence to describe your project
 - **Who** will accomplish **what** and **how**?
- Used to create press releases announcing recipients and by the USDA to post recipients on their website

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

Note: delete the example in the project application and write your own.



PROJECT PURPOSE

- Include a summary that addresses:
 - The specific issue, problem, or need
 - Goals of the project
 - Why the project is important
- Avoid:
 - In-depth details on how you will accomplish the project
 - Very specific step-by-step procedures for achieving the goals and objectives



BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL IMPACT

- Who are the beneficiaries of the project?
- How many beneficiaries will be impacted? (estimate – use number not percent)
 - Focus on who directly benefits. Avoid counting indirect beneficiaries
- In the “External Project Support” application question, you can expand on the describing who will benefit and why they support (aka how they will benefit). In this question, the applicant may expand on who directly benefits by talking about long term impact with indirect beneficiaries.
- Questions on beneficiaries and External Project Support makes up the “Impact & Industry Support” scoring criteria worth 25 points.



BUILDING ON A PREVIOUSLY FUNDED SCBG

- Describe how this project will build upon and differ from previously funded SCBG projects.
- Summarize the outcomes (or potential outcomes) of the previous efforts (3-5 sentences)
- Provide lessons learned and how this informs this project. Describe how the lessons learned and improvements will be incorporated to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals/outcomes.
- Describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not depending on grant funding indefinitely.



OTHER PROJECT FUNDING

- Will not fund duplicate projects
- If you submitted this project to a funding source other than the SCBG for funding and/or the project is currently funded through another source:
 - identify the funding
 - describe how your project differs from or supplements the other funded project or how you will modify this project or return funds for any duplicative efforts



EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

- Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why
- Address the impact the project has on these industries
- Include letters of support from the appropriate industries, partners, stakeholders, etc.



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

- Worth 30 points

Priority will be given to projects that have the potential to provide solutions that lead to *measurable* outcomes for the specialty crop industry and the public.

- Scoring criteria:
 - Is the outcome realistic and achievable? Do you have the ability to measure the outcome?
 - Does the project directly benefit producers or processors of Wisconsin specialty crops?
 - Will the project benefit them within the next five years?
 - Is there a plan for monitoring performance toward meeting each outcome?



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

- Outcome 1:** Increasing consumption and consumer purchasing of specialty crops
 - Outcome 2:** Increasing access to specialty crops and expanding specialty crop production and distribution
 - Outcome 3:** Increase food safety knowledge and processes
 - Outcome 4:** Improve pest and disease control processes
 - Outcome 5:** Develop new seed varieties and specialty crops
 - Outcome 6:** Expand specialty crop research and development
 - Outcome 7:** Improve environmental sustainability of specialty crops
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- You only need to select one. But may select multiple. Projects are not necessarily strengthened by selecting several outcome indicators. But every outcome you select, you need to measure and report on.
 - If you selected Marketing Promotion as a project activity you must select **Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops**



BUDGET – ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Salary and fringe
- Equipment rental – fees should be reasonable
- Supplies – need to be listed out in detail
- Travel – each trip needs to be detailed
- Contractual fees/subcontractors
- Other – see RFP for details

JUSTIFY & EXPLAIN: Make sure you clearly describe each budget item and explain why it is necessary for the completion of the project.



BUDGET – INELIGIBLE EXPENSES



Capital Expenses
(new, used or renovations)



Meals



Equipment
> \$5000

Fund Raising,
Lobbying



Real estate
or land
purchases



Supplanting,
duplicating



KEEP IN MIND

- If the project is mainly benefiting one individual, business, or entity, it will not be funded.
- Your purpose, goals, outcomes, and budget should all align with the same concept.
- No match is required.
- Indirect costs are not allowable.
- Make sure all your expenses are eligible.
- Grant expenses are reimbursed after you submit proof of payment.
- Projects can be partially funded.



THINGS TO AVOID

- Changing the application format
- Adding additional information not requested in the application
- Using a different budget format than the one in the application
- Waiting until the last minute to plan and submit the proposal
- Submitting a proposal with grammar and spelling errors
- Submitting a proposal without a third-party review
- Referencing non-specialty crops in the application/project description





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