



Specialty Crop Block Grant FFY 2025 Concept Proposal Instructions

For projects starting in early January 2026 and ending no later than November 15, 2027

Concept Proposal Deadline: February 17, 2025, 5:00 PM.

Colorado Department of Agriculture
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Broomfield, CO 80021

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Background

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) reauthorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to partner with state departments of agriculture **to enhance the competitiveness of growers of fruits, vegetables, and other horticultural crops in areas such as marketing, promotion, education, research, trade and nutrition.**

The Speciality Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) assists State departments of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by:

1. Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
2. Assisting producers with research and development related to specialty crops;
3. Expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and
4. Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) will accept concept proposals between January 2025 and February 17, 2025 for projects to begin in early January 2026. Colorado's award from USDA-AMS for 2025 is estimated to be approximately \$700,000. Applicants will NOT be required to provide a cash or in-kind matching contribution.

Informational webinar

CDA will hold a live question and answer session with the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program managers to learn about the program for 2025.

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Time: 10 am

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Register for the SCBGP informational webinar.

Specialty Crop Definition

For the purposes of this program, the USDA-AMS defines specialty crops as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). A complete list of eligible crops is available on the [USDA specialty crop block grant program \(SCBGP\) website](#).

Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and/or local organizations, academia, and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply with projects lasting from approximately January 1, 2026 to November 15, 2027, either as single entities or in combined efforts.

Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment. Projects may not solely benefit individuals, individual operations, or individual companies or businesses. All projects must solely enhance the competitiveness of Colorado specialty crops.

Project Eligibility

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end – they have a limited duration. A project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Examples of acceptable projects:

- A university requests funding 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 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 single 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 method.

Example of unacceptable projects:

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
- 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 non-profit organization uses grant funds to purchase produce for donation to a local school or community food pantry.
- 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 farmer's market.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase membership in the organization.

Project Priorities

Applicants are encouraged to develop projects pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

- Enhancing food safety;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing adaptation and mitigation strategies for farmers impacted by drought;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- Developing local and regional food systems;
- Improving food access in underserved communities and among veterans; and
- Sustainability.

CDA's priorities include:

- Supporting the next generation of farmers and ranchers;
- Scaling-up high-value agriculture and diverse market opportunities;
- Investing in new agricultural technology; and
- Promoting and incentivizing soil, water, and climate stewardship.

Program Funding

Availability

Colorado will award approximately \$700,000 to projects through the FFY25 SCBGP application period. Grant funds are available only for projects that support specialty crops grown in the State of Colorado and are intended to supplement (not replace) private, state, or third party participant funding.

Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions

Applicants for FFY25 SCBGP may provide a cash and/or in-kind matching contribution. This may increase the competitiveness of the application during the review process.

Grant Restrictions and Limitations

- For a complete list of allowable and unallowable costs and activities, see pages 10-19 in the [AMS Terms and Conditions document](#).
- Funds may not be used for publication costs and out-of-state travel to present research at conferences.
- Funds may not be utilized for paying down current debt or general administrative expenses (such as rent, phone, copiers, legal, etc.).
- Funds may not be utilized for capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings and land. Similarly, funds may not be utilized for purchasing equipment, and construction/building costs.
 - General purpose equipment means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities.
 - Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more.
 - Items below \$5,000 are considered Supplies, not Equipment



- Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs provided that the items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more are to be used to solely benefit the competitiveness of specialty crops.
 - Special purpose equipment means equipment that is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities.
- Funds may not be used for development or participation in lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S. Code 1352.
- Funds may not be used to fund political activities pursuant to 5 U.S. Code 1501-1508. • All proposals and reports submitted to the Department are subject to the Colorado Open Records Law.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)

SCBGP recipients must comply with the FFATA of 2006. This includes obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier and maintaining a current registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Instructions on how to obtain a Unique Entity ID at sam.gov. On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (generated by SAM.gov). The Unique Entity ID must be provided on the application to be considered for award.

Solicitation Process and Timeline

Competitive Grant Application Review Process

CDA's competitive solicitation process will be divided into two phases: Phase I, Concept Proposal and Phase II, Grant Proposal. Concept Proposal instructions are listed below.

Projects with the highest combined scores will serve as recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture as to which applicants should be invited to complete a Grant Proposal. All applicants will be notified whether they have been selected to complete the Phase II, Grant Proposal application on or before April 1, 2025. Instructions and completion deadline for Phase II will be given at that time.

All Grant Proposals must fully describe the project's purpose, potential impact, measurable outcomes, indicators, work plan, budget narrative, oversight, and commitment. An applicant's failure to meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in CDA's rejection of the award prior to or after the application review.

Phase I: Concept Proposal

Concept Proposals must use the Concept Proposal form and briefly describe the project in a clear, concise manner and be responsive to the questions identified in the Concept Proposal.

Once the Concept Proposals have been collected by CDA and the submission deadline has expired, CDA will determine whether the submitted Concept Proposals meet SCBGP grant eligibility requirements and will assess

all applicants' past grant performances (if any). Accepted proposals will be forwarded to the SCBGP Review Team, composed of specialty crop producers and representatives from public agencies and non-profit entities with an interest and expertise in specialty crop food and agricultural systems. The Review Team will rank proposals against the evaluation criteria (pages 8-11 of this document). Depending on the nature of the Concept Proposals, the Review Team may seek additional peer review for more specialized proposals. Concept proposals are due no later than February 17, 2025, 5:00 p.m. MT

Phase II: Grant Proposal

The Review Team will make recommendations to the Colorado Department of Agriculture as to which applicants should be invited to submit a Phase II, Grant Proposal, which will be included in CDA's FFY2025 SCBGP State Plan. The Department will ultimately decide which projects will be invited to Phase II.

Timeline

Phase I: Concept Proposal

- Request for concept proposals: Opens January 2025
- SCBGP Live Q&A Session: January 23, 2025, 10 am - 11 am
- Concept proposals due: February 17, 2025, 5:00 p.m. MT
- Committee reviews proposals: February 24 -March 14, 2025
- Final Project approval: approximately March 28, 2025

Phase II: Grant Proposal

This phase is by invitation only

- Invitation to submit grant proposals: Prior to April 1, 2025
- Phase II grant proposals due: TBD - mid-April 2025
- Grant proposals sent to USDA for approval: May 1, 2025

Grant Award

- Announcement of award funding: September 2025
- Contracting with CDA: September-December 2025
- Project start: January 1, 2026 or when contract is executed
- Project end date: No later than November 15, 2027

Concept Proposal Submission Instructions

Interested applicants can apply by completing the Colorado SCBGP Concept Proposal application, which is accessible via CDA's web site at www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant.

Questions regarding this grant and/or the competitive solicitation process should be directed to Sam Hahn, Program Manager, at cda_scbgp@state.co.us.

CDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, as well as increase or decrease the amount of requested funding based on findings and the level of available funds. Should the proposal review process suggest a funding level less than the amount requested, our staff will confer with the applicant to determine whether the amount recommended would significantly impact the project's overall feasibility. Prior funding of a project by the Department should not be considered precedent for funding of an apparently similar project. Each applicant will be notified of the Department's decision with respect to their proposal(s).

All proposals submitted to the Department are subject to the Colorado Open Records Law.

Concept Proposal Questions, Scoring, and Review Criteria

Applicants must respond to the following questions in the Concept Proposal. Failure to fully complete the Concept Proposal may result in disqualification.

Organization/Business Name (not a scored question):

Legal name of the organization that will be the lead applicant, serve as lead for the project, and will receive grant funds.

Organization/Business Type (not a scored question):

Describe the organization type that best fits the applicant: non-profit, sole proprietor, LLC, educational institution, etc.

Project Coordinator (not a scored question):

Name of the individual overseeing the project. This will be CDA's sole contact regarding the proposal/project. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for sharing CDA communications regarding the proposal/project with any additional involved parties. Please list additional contact information as well.

Address/Phone Number/Email Address (not a scored question):

Enter the organization's mailing address, phone number, and email address.

UEI Number (not a scored question, but required to qualify for application review):

List the applicant's Unique Entity Identity (UEI) number. There is no charge to obtain a UEI number. UEI numbers require a yearly renewal on SAM.gov and must be renewed throughout the entire grant period. If you do not know if you have a UEI number, need instructions on how to obtain one, or renew your UEI number, visit sam.gov. Your UEI number must be "active" on SAM.gov and must be publicly searchable.

Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher (not a scored question)

Indicate whether the applicant is a Beginning Farmer or Rancher or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, and whether the project will benefit Beginning Farmers or Ranchers or Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.



A Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than ten (10) years and substantially participates in the operation. A Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher means a farmer or rancher 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.

Project Title (not a scored question):

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less.

Start and End dates (not a scored question, but will be used to evaluate whether your project aligns with the grant program dates)

Projects should start no sooner than January 1, 2026 and end by November 15, 2027

Specialty Crop(s) to be used/studied/promoted (not a scored question, but will be evaluated to qualify for application review):

Which Colorado specialty crops will the project focus on? (required, but not scored)

List specific crops to be studied, evaluated or focused on. Listing fruits and vegetables in general is also acceptable, as long as they are produced in Colorado.

Expected Measurable Outcomes (will be evaluated as part of Project Plan):

Proposals must result in at least one of the seven outcomes as predetermined by USDA. Identify the outcome measure(s) the project will achieve and the indicator of success for each outcome. Outcomes are measurable changes in behavior or conditions that reflect a positive impact to the specialty crop industry. Refer to the Outcome Measures listed in the Appendix of this document for additional information on the required outcomes. It is recommended that applicants choose only one (1) outcome and one (indicator) for each proposed project. However, more than one can be selected.

Outcome Indicators (will be evaluated as part of Project Plan):

Provide at least one indicator for each outcome and the related quantifiable results. Refer to the Outcome Indicators listed in the Appendix of this document for additional information on the required indicators.

Project Purpose (25 points):

Using 500 words or less, identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address, and explain why the proposal is important and timely for the specialty crop industry. If the project builds upon a prior-year project, describe how the project differs from, complements, or builds upon the previous work.

Projects that duplicate research that has previously been conducted will be given lower priority.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how clearly the proposal states the specific issue, problem, or need the project will address, the timeliness and relevance to the specialty crop industry, if it will



provide a direct benefit to the specialty crop industry, the number of potential beneficiaries, and if the approach is rational and sound.

Project Plan (25 points):

Using 500 words or less, explain how the project will be completed, how data will be collected, and how the project will accomplish the outcome measure and indicator(s) selected.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based upon how the data will be collected and how well the project will accomplish the outcomes(s) and indicator(s) selected; are the outcomes and indicators appropriate for the project and do they contribute to the competitiveness of Colorado specialty crops.

Climate Smart Practices (not a scored question):

Yes or no answer. Describe any practices.

Projected Budget (25 points)

Complete a budget. All budget items should solely support enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops and correlate to the purpose of the project. In the “Explanation” area, go into some detail as to how the funds will be spent – salary, types of supplies or equipment needed, etc.

Complete each budget category by entering the amount of grant funds budgeted for each category. Failure to complete the required budget template may result in disqualification.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the budget is reasonable and consistent with the project’s purpose, outcome(s), and indicator(s). Are any matching funds or in-kind contributions included? Is it feasible that the proposed work can be accomplished given the proposed budget?

Budget categories:

- **Personnel:** Estimate the salary and wage costs for individuals employed by the applicant organization that will receive grant funding. Salary and wage costs must only be those that are directly applicable to the proposed project. Salary and wage costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual.
- **Fringe Benefits:** Estimate the total fringe benefit costs for the project participants. Fringe benefit costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual.
- **Travel:** Calculate the costs for the travel by taking into account destinations, number of trips, days traveling, transportation costs, estimated lodging and meal costs, and estimated mileage rate. Travel costs for individuals not employed by the applicant organization must be listed under Contractual. Travel costs must conform with GSA Travel rates: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. Travel funds may not be used to attend out-of-state conferences to present results.



- **Special Purpose Equipment:** Estimate the costs for any special purpose equipment. Special purpose equipment is an article of non expendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 to be used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. Within the description column, indicate the type of special purpose equipment to be purchased. If purchasing or renting equipment, identify the item and its value. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable. If the cost is under \$5,000, then include these items under Supplies. Special purpose equipment will require final approval by AMS.
- **Supplies:** Estimate the costs for supplies to be purchased. Supplies are items with an acquisition cost of less than \$5,000 per unit that are used exclusively for the objectives of the project. Within the description column, provide a brief explanation of the types of supplies needed for the project. General-use office supplies (paper, printer ink, pens, etc.) are considered indirect costs under the SCBGP and are not allowed.
- **Contractual:** Estimate the costs for any work on the project that will be performed by individuals not employed by the applicant organization (e.g. consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.).
- **Other:** Estimate all other costs for each year of the project such as conferences or meetings, speaker/trainer fees, data collection, and other budgeted costs associated with the project. Funds may not be used for publication costs in professional journals.

Requested Grant Amount (not a scored question):

Enter the total amount of SCBGP funds requested for the project. The number must match the amount listed in the Projected Budget.

Program Income: Estimate the amount of income (if any) that may be generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award. Within the description column, explain how program income may be generated. Program income cannot be used as profit for an organization and must be reinvested back into the project. Explain how the program income will be used in the project.

History (will be scored as part of project plan):

Has the organization previously received grant funds through the Colorado Department of Agriculture, or through other organizations? This is a heavily managed grant program, and experience is necessary to be able to track expenses, submit invoices, and complete required annual reporting.

External Support (25 points):

Letters of support are required with each concept paper. At least one and up to five letters of support may be included. Letters should include a contact email and phone number. Letters should be from the specialty crop industry, and should indicate how the project would make Colorado specialty crops more competitive. If industry supports multiple projects, stakeholders may be asked to rank the importance of projects.

Total number of points in the Concept Proposal: 100 Points.



Requirements and Limitations

Reimbursement Basis

Funds will be released to the applicant through the reimbursement of documented expenses incurred after the contract effective date. Reimbursement of expenses will be contingent upon compliance with Program guidelines as set forth by CDA. Claims for reimbursement may not be made more often than monthly. Grantees may apply for an advance payment of up to 50% of the total grant cost, and advance payment requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Insurance

If your project is selected, you must provide proof of insurance to be a vendor for the State of Colorado. Proof of insurance is required for general liability (\$1,000,000), automobile liability (\$1,000,000), and worker's compensation coverage (no set amount).

Federal Cost Principles

Federal cost principles are regulations based on organization type used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. Applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost principles appropriate to their organization and consistent application of cost principles to the SCBGP grant funds, and ensuring contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principle requirements.

- State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to 2 CFR 200.
- For-profit organizations will be subject to 48 CFR Subpart 31.2.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are not allowed.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project, program, service, or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typically, direct costs include, but are not limited to, compensation of employees who work directly on the award to include salaries and fringe benefits, travel that is necessary for the project, and equipment and supplies used solely for the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Below are typical indirect costs for specific types of organizations. The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate where all of the following conditions are met:

- Administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity;
- Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency; and
- The costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

The following should not be included in the Projected Budget costs:

- Information Technology services;
- Rent;
- Utilities and internet service;
- Telephone service (mobile and land-line);
- General office supplies; and
- Insurance.

Disqualifications

The following will result in the disqualification of a project proposal:

- Proposals from applicants with an active exclusion on the federal System for Award Management (SAM). Visit www.sam.gov for additional information to register your organization or to verify the status of your organization;
- Incomplete proposals, including proposals with one or more unanswered question and/or missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments;
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration; and
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project.



Review and Notification

Review Criteria

CDA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Colorado specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent. Applicants' Concept Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria set forth in the Concept Proposal Questions, Scoring, and Review Criteria section of this document.

Review Process

CDA will conduct two levels of review during the Concept Proposal process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether Concept Proposal meets basic requirements and assess applicants' past CDA grant performances (if any). The second level is a technical review by the CDA SCBGP Review Team to evaluate the merits of the Concept Proposals. This Review Team is composed of growers and representatives from public agencies and non-profit entities with an interest and expertise in specialty crop food and agricultural systems. The Review Team will rank proposals against the evaluation criteria and questions listed on pages above.

CDA may contact applicants for purposes of clarifying information contained in the proposal or to address questions about the proposed project.

Notification and Feedback

Projects that are disqualified utilizing the criteria above and those not invited to Phase II will be notified. Successful applicants will be invited to Phase II and will receive instructions for submitting a Grant Proposal. Applicants not invited to participate in Phase II may contact CDA and request feedback on their Concept Proposals.

Assistance and Questions

Questions regarding this grant and/or the competitive solicitation process should be directed to Sam Hahn at cda_scbgp@state.co.us

Conflict of Interest

In order to provide fair and equitable treatment in the application review process, CDA requires every Review Team member to sign a 'Non-conflict of Interest' form. This form ensures that all members have no professional interest in the applications they are reviewing.

Grant Award Guidelines

- The USDA is the funding entity and has the final approval for projects submitted. Although CDA and a review team will make the initial review and award recommendations to the USDA, the USDA will



make the final decision concerning grant awards. However, CDA will notify you of the status of your proposal.

- No grant funds may be expended until USDA has approved the state's recommended projects and the contract process is complete between CDA and the organization receiving the grant. This process may take until January 1, 2026 to complete after awards have been announced. Projects may start sooner if contracting is completed sooner.
- Grants will be made in support of specialty crops grown in the State of Colorado and are intended to supplement private, state, or third party participant funding.

Post-Award Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contract with the state. The contract will establish an approved project statement of work and budget, and will list responsibilities of project personnel. The statement of work will be the guiding document in terms of requirements for management of the grant. For project planning purposes, the applicant should not plan to start the project before January 1, 2026.

Applicants will be required to show proof of insurance (liability, auto and workers compensation) prior to contracting.

In general, the Program will operate on a cost reimbursement basis with payments made to the applicant upon submission of claims for reimbursement form, invoice and documentation supporting eligible project expenses. Expenditures will not be reimbursed without proof of payment. Copies of one of the following are required as proof of payment(s): cancelled checks, wire transfer confirmations, bank statements, credit card statements, signed receipts, debit notes, or other documentation as approved by the CDA. Receipts for media buys shall include details on dates, locations and placements of commercials, billboards, etc. Grantees may apply for an advance payment of up to 50% of the total grant cost, and advance payment requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Successful applicants will also be required to develop and submit interim and final reports as agreed between the CDA and the applicant necessary to document project progress and final results. The details of these reports will be specified in the above mentioned contract. In addition to the interim and final reports, the CDA will reserve the right to conduct a follow-up survey(s) of funded projects to determine long-term economic impacts.

CDA will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any applicant for work performed in the preparation of and/or production of an application or for any work performed prior to the effective date of the contract.

CDA reserves the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to project performance during and up to three years following the project's completion and to pursue any and all legal remedies to recover funds in the event of non-compliance or misrepresentation.

Additionally, CDA reserves the right to:



- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and applicant's agreement;
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the application requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to better serve the interests of the State of Colorado; and
- Amend the program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.

Civil Rights

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found [on the USDA website](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.



Appendix

Expected Measurable Outcomes and Indicators

Each project submitted must include only one of the seven 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.

All outcomes and indicators must be met within the timeline of the grant, including surveys to determine change of behavior.

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 USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

Applicants must clearly explain how they will collect the required data to report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s). The progress toward 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 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congress on these national outcome measures.

AMS will review the quality of the information received 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.



Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Outcomes and Indicators

The grant program outcomes and performance measures outlined below reflect direct stakeholder feedback and provide a framework that allows grant recipients to evaluate project activities more accurately in relation to each program's statutory purpose.

For recipients, the measures are:

- More feasible to accomplish and measure within a grant's period of performance;
- Better aligned with grant program purpose and recipient activities; and
- More reflective of work performed during the project.

These performance measures will go into effect beginning with the FY2023 grant application cycle.

Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops

1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops ____.

1.1a Adults ____.

1.1b Children ____.

1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops ____.

1.2a Adults ____.

1.2b Children ____.

1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted ____.

1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed ____.

1.5 Increased sales measured in:

1.5a Dollars ____.

1.5b Percent change ____.

1.5c Combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities ____.



Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution

2.1 Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops ____.

2.2 Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops ____.

2.3 Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or expanded _____. Of those: 2.3a Number of new online portals created to sell specialty crops _____.

2.3b Number with expanded seasonal availability _____.

2.3c Number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings _____.

2.3d Number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings _____.

2.4 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems _____.

2.5 Number of stakeholders that adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems _____.

2.6 Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems _____. Of those established:

2.6a Number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.) _____.

2.6b Number of partnerships with underserved organizations _____.

2.7 Total number of new/improved distribution systems developed _____. Of those, the number that:

2.7a Stemmed from new partnerships _____.

2.7b Increased efficiency _____.

2.7c reduced costs _____.

2.7d Increased specialty crop grower participation _____.

2.7e Expanded customer reach _____.

2.7f Increased online presence _____.

2.8 Number of specialty crop-related jobs:



2.8a Created ____.

2.8b Maintained ____.

2.9 Total number of new individuals who went into specialty crop production as a result of marketing _____. Of those, the number who are:

2.9a Beginning farmers or ranchers ____.

2.9b Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers ____.

2.10 Number of market access points that reported increased:

2.10a Revenue ____.

2.10b Sales ____.

2.10c Cost-savings ____.

Outcome 3: Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes

3.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ____.

3.2 Number of stakeholders that:

3.2a Established a food safety plan ____.

3.2b Revised or updated their food safety plan ____.

3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new/improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) ____.

3.4 Number of prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to mitigate food safety risks ____.

3.5 Number of stakeholders that used grant funds to:

3.5a Purchase ____.

3.5b Upgrade food safety equipment ____.



Outcome 4: Improve Pest and Disease Control Processes

4.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases ____.

4.2 Number of stakeholders that adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations ____.

4.3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases _____. Of those:

4.3a the number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management ____.

4.4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases ____.

4.5 Total number of producers/processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices ____.
Of those, the number that reported:

4.5a Reduction in product lost to pest and diseases ____.

4.5b Improved crop quality ____.

4.5c Reduction in labor costs ____.

4.5d Reduction in pesticide use ____.

4.6 Number of producers/processors improving the efficiency of pest and disease control diagnostics and response testing, as reported by:

4.6a Improving speed ____.

4.6b Improving reliability ____.

4.6c Expanding capability ____.

4.6d Increasing testing (i.e. survey work for pests) ____.

Outcome 5: Develop New Seed Varieties and Specialty Crops

5.1 Number of cultivar and/or variety trials conducted _____. Of those:

5.1a The number that advanced to further stages of development ____.

5.2 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties developed ____.

5.3 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties released ____.

5.4 Number of growers adopting new cultivars and/or varieties ____.

5.5 Number of acres planted with new cultivars and/or varieties ____.

Outcome 6: Expand Specialty Crop Research and Development

6.1 Number of research goals accomplished ____.

6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:

6.2a Yielded findings that supported continued research ____.

6.2b Yielded findings that led to completion of study ____.

6.2c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process or technology ____.

6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results ____.

6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals ____.

For each published research output, the:

6.4a Number of views/reads of published research/data ____.

6.4b Number of citations counted ____.

Outcome 7: Improve Environmental Sustainability of Specialty Crops

7.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies ____.

7.2 Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies ____.

7.3 Number of producers that adopted environmental best practices or tools ____.

7.4 Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/ conservation or other environmental outcomes ____.

7.5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies that focused on:

7.5a Water quality/ conservation ____.

7.5b Soil health ____.

7.5c Biodiversity ____.

7.5d Reduction in energy use ____.

7.5e Other positive environmental outcomes (optional) ____.

7.6 Number of additional acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators/specialty crops ____.