



## Reviewer Information

### 2023 LDAF Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) is requesting nominations of qualified individuals active in the specialty crop industry, academia, and public sectors to establish a professionally diverse Review Panel for the upcoming LDAF Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Members of the Review Panel will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to LDAF on submitted Louisiana Specialty Crop Block Grant Program proposals.

Reviewers should have knowledge of specialty crops, and/or grant writing or grant management experience, and the ability to devote the necessary time to complete the review process. Reviewers will be appointed by Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry. Reviewers will provide their time and service as a volunteer with no compensation. Reviewers will not be allowed to submit a grant proposal while serving on the Review Panel.

To nominate yourself as a potential reviewer, complete and sign the reviewer application form and e-mail to [mestay@ldaf.state.la.us](mailto:mestay@ldaf.state.la.us).

**Reviewer Application deadline is March 1, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.**

**Definition:** "Specialty Crops" are identified as: fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture." A list is provided at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbqp/specialty-crop> and contains commonly considered specialty crops and a list of ineligible commodities.

#### **The Review Process:**

- 1) Reviewers will be notified by March 6, 2023, of their selection to serve on the Review Panel.
- 2) Reviewers will be provided with electronic copies of all qualifying grant proposals to evaluate and approximately two weeks in which to review them. Printed copies available upon request. Each reviewer will review and score all proposals and submit their evaluation to the grant administrator. This review includes at least two comments for each proposal.
- 3) The grant administrator will compile the scores from all the reviewers to submit to the Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry for consideration of inclusion in Louisiana's State Plan.

**Responsibilities:**

- 1) Reviewers should be dedicated to high quality, fair reviews, and be able to devote sufficient time to the review process.
- 2) Reviewers will utilize their knowledge and expertise to evaluate grant proposals and provide scores and written comments about proposals from eligible entities that are applying for LDAF SCBGP grants.
- 3) Be objective and impartial
- 4) Free of organization, project, or racial biases
- 5) Able to maintain confidentiality
- 6) Forthcoming in declaring conflicts of interest

Reviewers should be knowledgeable of how to objectively evaluate and assess grant proposals for objectives, work plans, budgeting and expected results in determining the potential for project success.

Reviewers must write comments to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application. The review criteria are specific to the LDAF SCBGP, meets the needs of the specialty crop stakeholders' priorities identified by outreach activities, and LDAF goals and objectives.

Reviewers score proposals against the evaluation criteria. Reviewers DO NOT choose the proposals which will be funded through LDAF and the USDA.

Reviewers must sign the Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality Form and return to the LDAF Grant Administrator. The confidentiality policy requires that Reviewers refrain from sharing with anyone the comments, scores, recommendations, selections, or non-selections made before, during or after the LDAF SCBGP proposal review process.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), applicants may request a copy of the materials documenting the Grant Reviewer's evaluation/comments of their application. Applicants are entitled to this information. In these situations, reviewers' information is removed from the evaluation/comments.