



**Request for Applications**  
**Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry**  
**2021 Specialty Crop Program**  
**Requirements and Guidelines**

**State Agency**

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF or State)

**State Agency Contact**

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 Commodity Promotions and Research  
 Louisiana Department of Ag & Forestry  
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**Deadline for Receiving Completed Application Packet**

Applications must be received by the State Agency Contact **no later than the close of business (4:30 p.m. CST) on Thursday, April 22, 2021.**

**Definitions**

TERM	DEFINITION
<u>SCBGP</u>	<u>Specialty Crop Block Grant Program</u>
<u>Sub-grantee</u>	<u>A firm, organization or institution who is awarded a contract through LDAF</u>
<u>Application</u>	<u>A response to an RFA</u>
<u>Applicant</u>	<u>A firm or individual who responds to an RFA</u>
<u>RFA</u>	<u>A request for applications</u>
<u>Shall, Must, or Will</u>	<u>Denotes mandatory language; a requirement that must be met without alteration</u>
<u>Should, Can, or May</u>	<u>Denotes desirable, non-mandatory language</u>

## **General Information**

On December 21, 2004, the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to state Departments of Agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and it was amended under section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79 (the Farm Bill). SCBGP is currently implemented under 7 CFR part 1291 (published March 27, 2009; 74 FR 13313).

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) assists State departments of agriculture in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. grown specialty crops. Specialty crops are fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, nursery crops (including floriculture).

**NOTE: Funding for the 2021 SCBGP is contingent upon federal USDA fund availability. Grant funds will only be allocated if these federal funds are received.**

With approval of funding, each state department of agriculture that submits a state application that is reviewed and approved by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is to receive an estimated base grant of approximately \$241,627 and an amount based on the average of the most recent available value of specialty crop cash receipts in the State.

USDA SCBGP announcement of their Request for Applications from states has not been issued to date; however, LDAF anticipates at least **\$400,000.00 to be allocated for Louisiana**. If funds become available, LDAF will be awarding these funds through a competitive application process.

LDAF will develop a state plan requesting these federal funds to implement selected projects that meet program guidelines to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. For the purpose of this program, specialty crops are defined as commonly recognized fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture and horticulture).

This request for applications has been developed to provide information and encourage interested parties to apply for reimbursable funding of individual projects to be included in the LDAF state plan as sub-grantee partners. LDAF will only consider applications received **no later than the close of business (4:30 p.m. CST), Thursday, April 22, 2021**, for inclusion in LDAF's state plan.

Applicants shall describe how the project will impact and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Projects will be reviewed and scored by a panel that will provide recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry. LDAF reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested. Unallowable costs will be removed from projects' budgets that are selected for inclusion in the LDAF state plan.

## **Eligibility Qualifications to be Considered**

1. To be eligible for funding consideration the project(s) must enhance the competitiveness of Louisiana grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Reference the SCBGP-FB website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgpdefinitions> for a list of eligible specialty crops and ineligible commodities.
2. Individual farms are **NOT** eligible to apply for grant funds for profit. Producer associations, state and/or local organizations, state or local governments, qualified educational institutions, non-profits and other specialty crop stakeholders are eligible recipients.
3. Grant funds can be awarded for sub-grantee projects lasting up to two years and ten months. The project start period may not begin prior to October 1, 2021, and shall end no later than August 15, 2024.
4. Applications must describe how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. Grant funds **will not** be awarded for projects that directly benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.
5. Multi-state projects are eligible to apply and encouraged to provide a growing need for solutions to problems that cross state boundaries such as, but not limited to: food safety; plant pests and disease; research; crop-specific projects addressing common issues.
6. To be eligible applicants **must** provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. If you don't currently have a DUNS number you can apply for the number by clicking on the provided link: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
7. For organizations that are governed by a board/committee, a signed resolution by the authorized representative of the entity stating approval to conduct the project and to seek funding **must** be provided at the time of the application submission to be eligible.
8. USDA applications are not eligible unless they are project partners with producer associations, state and/or local organizations, state or local governments, qualified educational institutions, non-profits or other specialty crop stakeholders in Louisiana.
9. Funds **will not** be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single individual. Grant funds **CANNOT** be used to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent projects or services.

## **Work to be Performed and Scope of Services Required**

To be considered, projects must meet one or more of the following and support a program directed toward enhancing the competitiveness of Louisiana produced specialty crops. Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.

1. Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
2. Increasing the competitiveness of specialty crop farmers, including Native American, beginning farmers or socially disadvantaged farmers by addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers;
3. Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
4. 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;
5. Specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
6. Enhancing food safety;
7. Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
8. Pest and disease control;
9. Specialty crop development of sustainability production practices;
10. Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops

## **Administration of Grants**

AMS applies federal grant uniform administrative requirements to the management of each grant award, and the State Department of Agriculture shall in turn apply these requirements to the sub-grantees.

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards of 2 CFR part 200 as implemented by the USDA under 2 CFR part 400 and the most recent SCBGP General Award Terms and Conditions. An application funded with the release of Federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply, compliance with Federal regulations. Grant recipients and sub-recipients are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable Federal and State regulations.

The code of Federal Regulations is accessible through the National Archives and Records Administration.

A complete list of current OMB Circulars can be found on the White House website.

## **Allowable/Unallowable Costs**

Summary of allowable and unallowable costs under this SCBGP can be reviewed in common categories at the following USDA link on page 15 section 4.7.2.  
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/SCBGP2019RFA.pdf>

Reference Subpart E-Cost Principles of 2 CFR part 200 for a complete explanation of the allowability of costs.  
<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1&rgn=div5#sp2.1.200.e>

### **Exceptions to the allowable costs found at the above links are included within this section below:**

All travel related meals and incidentals will be reimbursed at the federal per diem rate and not based on actual expenditures. Travel and other expenses must follow federal and state guidelines for use of federal funds.

Indirect costs shall NOT be an allowable expense.

Tuition remission costs shall NOT be an allowable expense.

Out-of-state travel to present research or to attend a conference shall NOT be an allowable expense.

All awards and sub-awards are subject to those cost principles applicable to the particular organization concerned. For example, if a State government sub-awards to a university, the cost principles applicable to a university will apply. All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards of 2 CFR part 200* as implemented by the USDA under 2 CFR part 400 and the most recent SCBGP General Award Terms and Conditions. An application funded with the release of Federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply, compliance with

Federal regulations. Grant recipients and sub-recipients are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable Federal regulations.

The code of Federal Regulations is accessible through the National Archives and Records Administration.

A complete list of current OMB Circulars can be found on the White House website.

## **Application Due Date**

LDAF must receive complete application packets containing all mandatory requirements **no later than 4:30 p.m. CST on Thursday, April 22, 2021.** The signed application packet must be submitted to Michelle Estay, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry by email. The electronic version must be submitted to [estay@ldaf.state.la.us](mailto:estay@ldaf.state.la.us). All mandatory requirements, again, must be received no later than the deadline for receiving complete applications.

LDAF will reply to electronic version submissions to acknowledge receipt of the emailed application files. If applicants do not receive an acknowledgement receipt email soon after submission, it is the applicants' responsibility to contact Michelle Estay to verify that the application packet was received prior to the deadline, email for inquiry at [estay@ldaf.la.gov](mailto:estay@ldaf.la.gov). No exceptions will be made regarding the receipt of complete applications by the required application deadline.

LDAF does not review submission(s) for contents prior to the deadline to check if all mandatory requirements have been met. This is the sole responsibility of the applicant. A check list has been provided to assist applicants with confirming a complete application packet has been accomplished.

## **Mandatory Information Required in Application Packet and Submission Requirements**

- 1. ONE COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKET SHALL BE REQUIRED BY EMAIL. THE PROJECT PROFILE MUST BE SENT IN A MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENT, BUT ALL OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION OR FORMS CAN BE SENT IN SCANNED FILE FORMATTING.**
2. A completed **signed application cover page** form shall be required in the application packet.
3. In addition to a completed and signed **SF-424**, there shall be required in the application packet the **Project Profile**. The acceptable font pitch should be no smaller than 11, single spaced and all margins must be one inch.
4. Application packets must be submitted in entirety.



2. A concise outline the project's outcome(s), and
3. A description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

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

#### 4. Project Purpose

*Provide the Specific Issue, Problem or Need that the Project will Address*

#### 5. Provide a Listing of the Objectives that this Project Hopes to Achieve

*Add more objectives by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete objectives that aren't necessary.*

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

Objective 4

Add other objectives as necessary

#### 6. Project Beneficiaries

Estimate the number of project beneficiaries: ..... Enter the Number of Beneficiaries

Does this project directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers as defined in the RFA? Yes  No

Does this project directly benefit beginning farmers as defined in the RFA? Yes  No

#### Statement of Enhancing Specialty Crops

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that this project enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops in accordance with and defined by [7 U.S.C. 1621](#). Further information regarding the definition of a specialty crop can be found at [www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp).

#### 7. Continuation Project Information

*If your project is continuing the efforts of a previously funded SCBGP project, address the following:*

**Describe how this Project will differ from and build on the Previous Efforts**

**Provide a Summary (3 to 5 sentences) of the Outcomes of the Previous Efforts**

**Provide Lessons Learned on Potential Project Improvements**

**What was previously learned from implementing this project, including potential improvements?**

**How are the lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes?**

**Describe the Likelihood of The Project becoming Self-Sustaining and not Indefinitely Dependent on Grant Funds**

**8. Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs**

The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Did you submit this project to a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?

Yes  No

**If Your Project is receiving or will Potentially receive Funds from another Federal or State Grant Program**

**Identify the Federal or State grant program(s).**

**Describe how the SCBGP project differs from or supplements the other grant program(s) efforts.**

**9. External Project Support**

*Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project).*

**10. Expected Measurable Outcomes**

***Select the Appropriate Outcome(s) and Indicator(s)/Sub-Indicator(s)***

*You must choose at least one of the eight outcomes listed below and in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#), which were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the performance of the SCBGP on a national level and at least one indicator for each Performance Measure chosen.*

**Outcome Measure(s)**

*Select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable for this project from the listing below.*

- Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (# 1 required for marketing projects)
- Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- Outcome 4:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources
- Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety
- Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

### Outcome Indicator(s)

Provide at least one indicator listed below in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#) and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator.

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

#### **Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a.**

Of the 150 total number of children and youth reached, 132 will gain knowledge about eating more

### (EXPLANATION OF OUTCOME PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS)

#### Outcome Measures

*Outcome 1: To enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales*  
**THIS # 1 IS MANDATORY FOR ALL MARKETING AND PROMOTION PROJECTS.**

#### Outcome Definition:

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion projects focus efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, and generate publicity, attract new customers, or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue. These include, but are not limited to:

- Uses of social media to market and promote;
- Specialty crop local, regional and national campaigns;
- Specialty crop only tradeshow;
- Website promotion and development;
- Use/development of billboards, radio, television, magazine and email ads, marketing materials such as direct mail, brochures;
- Agritourism;
- Export market development;
- Retail promotions including point-of-purchase items, labels, packaging etc.;
- Farmers market promotions; and
- Marketing and promotion campaigns with an education component directed to consumers.

The specific measure must be expressed as a dollar value and percentage increase in sales of one or more specialty crops in one or more States or foreign markets as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities. For example, an expected outcome of growth in sales from 5% to 10% is not acceptable by itself, but in combination with an increase in sales of \$1 million to \$2 million it is acceptable. This requirement means that an established baseline of sales in dollars should already exist at the time of application. For projects that do not already have a baseline of sales in dollars, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine such a baseline in order to meet the requirement to document the value of sales increases by the end of the project.

*Indicator:* Sales increased from \$\_\_\_\_\_ to \$\_\_\_\_\_ and by \_\_\_\_\_ percent, as result of marketing and/or promotion activities.

AMS understands that sales can be impacted by a host of unrelated issues including trade disputes, phytosanitary issues, export conditions, weather, and other factors affecting the farmer, supply chain, retailers, wholesalers and/or consumers. The above factors demonstrate that even a perfectly executed marketing campaign can result in sales remaining constant or even declining. These factors and events that either positively or negatively impacted the sales of a project can be explained in the performance report.

*Outcome 2: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption*  
*Indicators:*

1. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of children and youth reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
2. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of adults reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
3. Number of new and improved technologies and processes to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of specialty crops (excluding patents) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of new specialty crops and/or specialty crop products introduced to consumers \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome 3: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access and awareness*

*Indicators:*

1. Of the \_\_\_\_\_ total number of consumers or wholesale buyers reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/preserved/obtained/prepared

2. Of the \_\_\_\_ total number of individuals (culinary professionals, institutional kitchens, specialty crop entrepreneurs such as kitchen incubators/shared-use kitchens, etc.) reached,
  - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
  - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/prepared/preserved/obtained
  
3. Number of existing delivery systems/access points of those reached that expanded and/or improved offerings of specialty crops
  - a. \_\_\_\_ farmers markets
  - b. \_\_\_\_ produce at corner stores
  - c. \_\_\_\_ school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events, etc.)
  - d. \_\_\_\_ grocery stores
  - e. \_\_\_\_ wholesale markets
  - f. \_\_\_\_ food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
  - g. \_\_\_\_ home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
  - h. \_\_\_\_ lawn and garden centers
  - i. \_\_\_\_ other systems/access points, not noted
  - j. \_\_\_\_ total (if not reported above)
  
4. Number of new delivery systems/access points offering specialty crops
  - a. \_\_\_\_ farmers markets
  - b. \_\_\_\_ produce at corner stores
  - c. \_\_\_\_ school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events, etc.)
  - d. \_\_\_\_ grocery stores
  - e. \_\_\_\_ wholesale markets
  - f. \_\_\_\_ food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
  - g. \_\_\_\_ home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
  - h. \_\_\_\_ lawn and garden centers
  - i. \_\_\_\_ other systems/access points, not noted
  - j. \_\_\_\_ total (if not reported above)

*Outcome 4: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources.*

*Indicators:*

1. Numbers of plant/seed releases (i.e., cultivars, drought-tolerant plants, organic, enhanced nutritional composition, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Adoption of best practices and technologies resulting in increased yields, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and conservation of resources (select at least one below).
  - a. Number of growers/producers indicating adoption of recommended practices \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Number of growers/producers reporting reduction in pesticides, fertilizer, water used/acre \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of producers reporting increased dollar returns per acre or reduced costs per acre \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Number of acres in conservation tillage or acres in other best management practices \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of habitat acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators and specialty crops \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome 5: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems*

*Indicators:*

1. Number of new or improved innovation models (biological, economic, business, management, etc.), technologies, networks, products, processes, etc. developed for specialty crop entities including producers, processors, distributors, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of innovations adopted \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of specialty crop growers/producers (and other members of the specialty crop supply chain) that have increased revenue expressed in dollars \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of new diagnostic systems analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases. \_\_\_\_\_  
[Diagnostic systems refer to, among other things: labs, networks, procedures, access points.]
5. Number of new diagnostic technologies available for detecting plant pests and diseases. \_\_\_\_\_  
[The intent here is not to count individual pieces of equipment or devices, but to enumerate technologies that add to the diagnostic capacity.]
6. Number of first responders trained in early detection and rapid response to combat plant pests and diseases \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of viable technologies/processes developed or modified that will increase specialty crop distribution and/or production \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of growers/producers that gained knowledge about science-based tools through outreach and education programs \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome 6: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety*

*Indicators:*

1. Number of viable technologies developed or modified for the detection and characterization of specialty crop supply contamination from foodborne threats \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of viable prevention, control and intervention strategies for all specialty crop production scales for foodborne threats along the production continuum \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of individuals who learn about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices and number of those individuals who increase their food safety skills and knowledge\_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention technologies \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of reported changes in prevention, detection, control, and intervention strategies\_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome 7: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources*

*Indicators:*

*Number of projects focused on:*

1. Increased understanding of fecal indicators and pathogens \_\_\_\_\_
2. Increased safety of all inputs into the specialty crop chain \_\_\_\_\_
3. Increased understanding of the roles of humans, plants and animals as vectors \_\_\_\_\_
4. Increased understanding of preharvest and postharvest process impacts on microbial and chemical threats \_\_\_\_\_
5. Number of growers or producers obtaining on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices) \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome 8: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development.*

*Indicators:*

1. Number of new rural careers created \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of new urban careers created \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of jobs maintained/created \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of small businesses maintained/created \_\_\_\_\_
5. Increased revenue/increased savings/one-time capital purchases (in dollars) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of new beginning farmers who went into specialty crop production \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of socially disadvantaged famers who went into specialty crop production \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information:

- Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers.
- Beginning Farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer is a farmer 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.

**Miscellaneous Outcome Measure**

In the unlikely event that the outcomes and indicators above the selected outcomes are not relevant to your project, you must develop a project-specific outcome(s) and indicator(s) which will be subject to approval by AMS.

**11. Data Collection to Report on Outcomes and Indicators**

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator in the space below. Detail the steps that will be taken to measure and record the data.

**12. Budget Narrative**

All expenses described in this Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP. Applicants should review the Louisiana Request for Applications page 5 Allowable/Unallowable Costs prior to developing their budget narrative and the USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs.

Budget Summary	
Expense Category	Funds Requested
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	

<b>Total Budget</b>	
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**Personnel**

List the organization’s employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. See the USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Salaries and Wages, and Presenting Direct and Indirect Costs Consistently under section 47.1 for further guidance.

#	Name/Title	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

<b>Personnel Subtotal</b>	
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**Personnel Justification**

For each individual listed in the above table, describe the activities to be completed by name/title including approximately when activities will occur. Add more personnel by copying and pasting the existing listing or deleting personnel that aren’t necessary.

**Personnel 1:**

**Personnel 2:**

**Personnel 3:**

**Add other Personnel as necessary**

***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
1			
2			
3			
4			

<b>Fringe Subtotal</b>	
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***Travel***

*Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.*

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

<b>Travel Subtotal</b>	
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**Travel Justification**

*For each trip listed in the above table describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.*

**Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):**

**Trip 2(Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):**

**Trip 3(Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):**

**Add additional trips as necessary**

### **Conforming with Your Travel Policy**

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization’s established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#) as applicable.

### **Equipment**

*Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. “Special purpose equipment” is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. See the USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - Special Purpose for further guidance*

*Rental of “general purpose equipment” must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant. See USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - General Purpose for definition, and Rental or Lease Costs of Buildings, Vehicles, Land and Equipment.*

#	Item Description	Rental or Purchase	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				

<b>Equipment Subtotal</b>	
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### **Equipment Justification**

*For each Equipment item listed in the above table describe how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Add more equipment by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete equipment that isn’t necessary.*

**Equipment 1:**

**Equipment 2:**

**Equipment 3:**

**Add other Equipment as necessary**

### **Supplies**

*List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. See USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices for further information.*

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

<b>Supplies Subtotal</b>	
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### Supplies Justification

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

### Contractual/Consultant

Contractual/consultant costs are the 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 separately. (Repeat this section for each contract/consultant.)

### Itemized Contractor(s)/Consultant(s)

Provide an itemized budget (personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, other, etc.) with appropriate justification. If indirect costs are/will be included in the contract, include the indirect cost rate used. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.

#	Name/Organization	Hourly Rate/Flat Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

<b>Contractual/Consultant Subtotal</b>	
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### Contractual Justification

Describe the project activities each contractor or consultant will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/general-schedule/>), provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. See USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Contractual and Consultant Costs for acceptable justifications.

**Contractor/Consultant 1:**

**Contractor/Consultant 2:**

**Contractor/Consultant 3:**

**Add other Contractors/Consultants as necessary**

**Conforming with your Procurement Standards**

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through.326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

**Other**

*Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.*

*If you budget meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs. See USDA Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Meals for further guidance.*

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

<b>Other Subtotal</b>	
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**Other Justification**

*Describe the purpose of each item listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).*

**Indirect Costs**

*Indirect costs are not an allowable expense by sub-grantees.*

**13. Program Income**

*Program income is gross income—earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant—directly generated by the grant-supported activity, or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.*

Source/Nature of Program Income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income into the project to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops	Estimated Income

<b>Program Income Total</b>	
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## 14. Work Timeline

Identify and detail the activities necessary to accomplish the project objectives. Include monthly timelines for accomplishing each activity. Make sure to include when your outcome measure data collection plan activity will be conducted and be accomplished. Examples:

Describe Activity	Who Conducting Activity	When Conducted
Develop media plan and campaign events	Marketing Specialist	January-March 2017
Plant crops to begin field study	Research Assistant	April 2017
Cooperative members meeting to discuss project activities	Members and Project Manager	October 2016

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## Selection Procedure

1. All applications received **no later than the close of business (4:30 p.m. CST) Thursday, April 22, 2021** will be reviewed by internal administrative screening to determine if the applicant is eligible, if the project is eligible and if all mandatory application information is provided. Eligible applications will then be evaluated by a review panel scoring the applications on the merits of the proposals based on criteria listed below.
2. The following criteria will be used by the review panel:
  - A. Significance to the industry
  - B. Detailed project work plan
  - C. Expected measurable outcomes
  - D. Reasonableness of budget
  - E. Overall application

Each of the five (5) categories will be rated on a point system as specified in #3 below. Applications receiving highest averaged panel scores will be recommended to the LDAF for funding. LDAF Commissioner will review scores and panel recommendations to determine projects that will be included in LDAF's state plan. The Commissioner will make the final selection of projects and determine the amount to be allocated to each.

In the case of a tie in the final scores, the project that received the higher (A) Significance score will be ranked higher. If there is a need to still address a tie, then (D), (C), (E) and (B) scores will be used in this order until the tie is broken and the projects will be ranked accordingly.

3. The five (5) criteria will be scored on a point system according to the following aspects of their application:
  - A. Significance (1-30 points) – Scored based upon the extent to which the project, if successfully completed, will make an important and/or original contribution to the enhancement of the competitiveness of Louisiana produced specialty crops.
  - B. Work Plan (1-15 points) – Scored based upon the feasibility and reasonableness of the timeline, how the activities relate to the project objectives and expected measurable outcomes; and how likely project will become self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on federal funding.
  - C. Expected Measurable Outcomes (1-15 points) – Scored based upon the extent to which the project includes one or two measurable outcomes that directly support the project's purpose, the direct importance to the beneficiaries and the detailed plan for monitoring the performance toward meeting each outcome.
  - D. Reasonableness of Budget (1- 25 points) – Scored based upon reasonable cost for services rendered and total proposed cost of the project, the need of budgeted items to complete the project and the adequate explanation of the budget narrative of each line item.
  - E. Overall Plan Application (1-15 points) – Scored based upon the likelihood that the proposed work can be accomplished within the proposed budget by the applicant, given staff experience, available resources, institutional/organizational commitment, and stakeholder support.

### ◆ Scoring Penalty

Past Compliance (negative 10 points) – Subtracted based on prior SCBGP award compliance with reporting requirements and project management by PI/Sub-grantee lead for lack of compliance or poor project management. LDAF staff will determine if this reduction is applicable.

### Funding

Projects must demonstrate strong justification for the requested budget. Funding will be available for projects extending no more than two years and ten months beyond the state project start date.

More than one award may be granted. LDAF reserves the right to fund proposals partially or fully depending on the number of applications and the amount of Louisiana grant funding. LDAF reserves the right to reject any or all applications received.

LDAF may choose to use a portion of the funds for projects conducted internally, such as specialty crop marketing campaigns, promotions, surveys, etc.

Selected projects will receive funding on a cost reimbursement basis. Funds will not be advanced to sub-grantees. Detailed invoicing is required and receipts must be retained and maintained in project document records.

Sub-grantees awarded grant funding shall have thirty days from receipt of project contract to expedite and deliver signed originals of contract to LDAF. If a sub-grantee fails to meet this requirement, funds allotted to the sub-grantee project in question may be reassigned to another qualified project unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the sub-grantee, which will be the decision of LDAF. The withdrawal of the grant offer will be conducted in writing and sent certified mail to the sub-grantee. The withdrawal will be effective as of the delivery date of the certified mail.

Sub-grantees that receive grant fund awards will relinquish claim to any unexpended balance of awarded grant funds at the end of their project term. These funds will be reassigned to another project's activities or released to the USDA.

Any relinquished funds will be extended to unfunded projects based on scoring results. If those projects do not wish to conduct that project or can't carry-out the project based on time remaining in the grant period or insufficient funding to carry-out the project, then funding will be extended to LDAF projects or to current project recipients to enhance, expand or extend their project activities.

Funds awarded to sub-grantees can be requested returned at any time based on insufficient project progress, non-compliance to all state and federal laws and regulations and failure to comply with the terms of the grant award contract. This includes reporting and expenditure documentation.

## **Award Information**

LDAF will select projects to be developed into one LDAF grant submission to AMS. LDAF is under no legal or other obligation to award a grant on the basis of a response to this RFA and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications submitted.

Announcement of the selected projects to be included in Louisiana's State Plan will be made in writing by email to all applicants by **May 12, 2021**.

Selected projects may be required to provide additional detailed information or make revisions/adjustments to a project's work plan, budget and measurables prior to inclusion into the LDAF state plan.

All projects selected to receive funding will be required to execute a grant contract with the LDAF in order to receive grant funds. Each grant recipient will be required to designate a project manager. The project manager will be responsible for timely implementation of the approved scope of work, providing required fiscal reports, documenting expenditures for grant contract payment, and submitting grant activity reports to LDAF.

Sub-grantees awarded grant funding shall have thirty days from receipt of project contract to expedite and deliver signed originals of contract to LDAF. If a sub-grantee

fails to meet this requirement, funds allotted to the sub-grantee project in question may be reassigned to another qualified project unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the sub-grantee, which will be the decision of LDAF. The withdrawal of the grant offer will be conducted in writing and sent certified mail to the sub-grantee. The withdrawal will be effective as of the delivery date of the certified mail.

Selected projects will begin after AMS has made their official award to LDAF and contracts have been entered into by and between LDAF and the sub-grantee(s) as required by the laws of the State of Louisiana.

Selected project sub-grantees will be required to register the organization with the federal System for Award Management (<http://www.sam.gov>). Registration with this site allows the organization to do business with the federal government and ensures that federal funds are not paid to organizations which have been suspended or debarred.

**Contracts will NOT be entered into between LDAF and sub-grantees until their registration of good standing in sam.gov is confirmed by LDAF staff. Any change in good standing or debarment must be reported to LDAF within a week of the status change.**

## **Payments**

Selected project sub-grantees will be required to complete the **Electronic Vendor Payment Selection Form**, which can be found at the link below. It has been provided for your review and information. The form does not have to be included in the application packet, but will be required once your project has been selected for funding. <http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/vendorcenter/regnhelp/index.aspx>

Requests for payments must be submitted at least quarterly so that all project funds are dispersed by the end of the project performance period. LDAF cannot reimburse expenses incurred after the grant performance period has ended. Any project funds remaining unused will be redirected at the discretion of LDAF.

## **Post Award Reporting Requirements**

All correspondence for the program **MUST** be submitted electronically in a Microsoft Word format. This includes applications, quarterly reports, and final reports. Pictures should be in a .jpg format and inserted in the Word document.

**Quarterly Performance Reports** must be completed by the sub-grantee(s) and submitted to LDAF. Sub-grantees who do not submit the quarterly reports or who submit reports that do not meet all reporting requirements may be required to return all previously disbursed funds to LDAF. Failure to submit reports timely and failure to respond to additional information requests will affect funding consideration of future grant year applications. Report requirements should include a summary of activities conducted and timeline of activities accomplished in the following headings:

1. Project Information
2. Activities Performed
3. Accomplishments
4. Challenges and Developments
5. Outcome(s) and Indicator(s) Results to Date
6. Upcoming Activities
7. Project Expenditures to Date
8. Program Income (If Applicable)

A **Final Performance Report** will be required following the end date of the grant contract with LDAF. The final report shall include the project's detailed activities during the life of the project.

1. Project Information
2. Project Background
3. Activities Performed
4. Beneficiaries
6. Outcome(s) and Indicator(s) / Sub-Indicator(s)
7. Federal Project Expenditures

Sub-grantees shall be required to clarify or provide additional information, if requested, until USDA final report approval has been obtained from USDA.

Failure to comply with reporting will affect funding consideration of future grant year applications.

LDAF reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to LDAF will be subject to the public record law.

LDAF reserves the right to conduct site visits to any and all sub-grantees to ensure that work is progressing and that fiscal procedures are followed. Monitoring will include financial and program information.

Sub-grantee shall notify LDAF of program income anticipated or realized. Sub-grantee shall comply with LDAF use determination of said income. Sub-grantee must provide detailed listing of expenditures to LDAF explaining how program income is to be spent to benefit specialty crops within the program activities. Use of program income must comply in accordance with 2 CFR §200.307(e).

## **Scope and Budget Prior Approval Requirements**

If a change in project scope is needed during the project period, a prior written request must be made to LDAF to request adding or removing project activities that will change the scope of the project. A written justification for the change and description of the change is required.

If a change of 10% of a project's total budget is needed, a prior written request must be submitted to LDAF for approval consideration. A written justification for the change and description of the change is required.

No change in budget or change in scope is allowed without prior written approval by LDAF and the USDA. The total budget amount as dictated by the approved grant award cannot be adjusted without written approval by LDAF and a change in the existing contract between the agencies.

Absence or change in sub-grantee/project management - When a sub-grantee/project manager plans to relinquish active direction of the project for a period of more than three consecutive months, the sub-grantee shall submit a written notification (email is acceptable) to LDAF. LDAF will submit the request to USDA for approval. The written notification shall contain the new manager name as well as the justification for the change.

If Special Purpose Equipment or Travel, not included in the original project award, is deemed needed by the sub-grantee, prior written approval must be obtained. A written request must be made to LDAF providing the need for said equipment and travel, the description, and price of equipment or travel. Such request will be forwarded to the USDA for final approval.

## **Permitting Requirements**

Projects may include work that requires permits and clearances. LDAF does not determine which, if any, permits are required. Applicants are responsible for determining, obtaining and paying for all necessary permits that apply to their project.

## **Record Requirements**

Sub-grantees shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all appropriate books and records to document time, effort, and expenses related to the work under this grant. Sub-grantees shall maintain such books and records for the period of (5) years following the date the final Federal Financial Report (SF 425) is submitted by LDAF to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program–AMS staff. This date is estimated to be December 30, 2024. Therefore, record retention would be required through **December, 30, 2029. (If there is an audit and finding investigation this period could be extended.)**

## **Questions**

All requests for additional information and/or questions regarding this RFA should be directed to Michelle Estay at the internet address on page 1 and must be submitted in writing. LDAF staff will be available to provide information on the panel review process and requirements, and make suggestions to strengthen proposals for review; however, to ensure that all applications receive equal treatment, LDAF staff cannot provide applicant preparation services.