Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: TBA

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.170

Application Due Date:
By 4:00 p.m. CST on January 13, 2021
No late submissions accepted.

Doug Goehring, Agriculture Commissioner

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CONTENTS

1) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

a) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Funding for the 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is contingent upon the United States Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) announcing a 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant. Under the Farm Bill, The North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) anticipates receiving grant funding from USDA-AMS to **solely** enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

b) PURPOSE

NDDA is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award 2021 SCBGP funds from the USDA-AMS for projects ***solely*** enhancing the competitiveness of North Dakota's specialty crops.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). For a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible commodities, please visit: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop.

SCBGP applicants must focus on developing projects solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:
- enhancing food safety;
- improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors;
- investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- 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 and;
- sustainability.

NDDA has identified the following top three priorities:
- pest and disease control;
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; and
- investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes.

2) AWARD INFORMATION

a) FUNDING EXPECTED

NDDA anticipates that up to $2.7 million will be awarded to projects solely enhancing the competitiveness of North Dakota specialty crops.

b) AWARD AMOUNT

Grant project amounts for FY2021 do not have a floor or a cap. NDDA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested. Twenty-Seven (27) projects were awarded in FY2020 with an average award of $111,850.00.

c) GRANT PERIOD DURATION

The maximum grant duration is two (2) years and grant funds cannot be expended before October 1, 2021, or after September 30, 2023.

d) CONTINUATION PROJECTS

If the project is a continuation of a project that the SCBGP funded previously, the applicant must describe how the project **differs from** and **builds** on the previous project's efforts. The applicant must also describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds.

3) ELIGIBLITY INFORMATION

a) ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-profit and for-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government entities, including tribal governments; and public or private colleges and universities are eligible to apply. There is no limit on the number of proposals applicants may submit; however, each proposal should be for a wholly unique project. Applicants should not submit multiple proposals for a single project.

Projects must **solely** enhance the competitiveness of North Dakota specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in solely enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. Visit the USDA-AMS link for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible commodities.

b) BENEFIT MORE THAN ONE PRODUCT OR ORGANIZATION

Applications for grant funds should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

NDDA will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Projects disparaging the mission, goals, and/or actions of another organization are unallowable.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE PROJECTS:

Examples of <u>Unacceptable</u> Projects

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop to make a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- 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 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 farmers market.
- A single specialty crop organization requests grant funds to market its organization so that it can increase membership in the organization.

Examples of <u>Acceptable</u> 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 an extension service 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 methods.

d) COST SHARING OR MATCHING

NDDA SCBGP does not have a cost-sharing or matching requirement. However, in some cases an applicant proposes cost-sharing or matching contributions as a mechanism to ensure all grant funds will solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops. In this situation, the recipient of funds must keep adequate records to identify and document the specific costs or contributions proposed to meet the match or cost-share and document how the valuation was determined.

e) DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

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. Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects, unlike operations, have a definitive beginning and end. A project has an overarching goal, accomplished by a series of individual activities or tasks over a short duration.

Examples of projects could include:
- Researching new cultivars
- Marketing apples through a targeted promotional campaign

Activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects might include:
- Hiring personnel
- Purchasing special purpose equipment
- Holding an educational workshop
- Planting specialty crops
- Distributing product promotional materials

4. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All application materials must be provided in **<u>one email</u>** to scbg@nd.gov by the due date. Each full application will include the 2021 Cover Sheet and 2021 SCBG Project Profile Template that is posted on the NDDA website: https://www.nd.gov/ndda/scbgp. If you cannot access the site or have trouble with the application, please contact Deanna Gierszewski at scbg@nd.gov or 701-328-2191.

All applicants must adhere to the following instructions, in addition to other requirements as stated in this RFA (Request for Applications) to be considered eligible for grants. Applications missing any of the subsequent information may be deemed ineligible.

- Proposals **<u>must</u>** not exceed ten **(10) pages in length**. The cover sheet and letters of support do not count toward the total. Letters of support are encouraged.
- Proposals **<u>must</u>** be typed using **the font set in each section of the application** with **font size being 11 or 12 pitch** with all **margins at 1 inch**. The application cover sheet is a fillable PDF. All fields must be completed before signing and emailing.
- Proposals must use the Project Profile Template in **<u>Word</u>** and ensure all sections are completed. **(note: *.doc or *.docx are the only acceptable file type.)**
- NDDA must receive an electronic copy of the full application that includes the cover sheet, Project Profile Template in Word, and any letters of support by the stated deadline - **4:00 p.m. CST on January 13, 2021**.

b) COVER SHEET

Each applicant must complete the 2021 SCBG Cover Sheet posted on the NDDA website. If you are unable to attach an electronic signature, you may print, sign, scan, and email the cover sheet. **Do not modify the format of the cover sheet or make your own form.**

c) PROJECT PROFILE TEMPLATE

Each applicant must complete the 2021 Project Profile Template that can be found on the NDDA website. Do not modify the format of the application template or make your own template. **The template must be sent in Word.**

Please keep the following items in mind while preparing an application. Past peer review committee members have pointed out the following items as concerns:

- **<u>Conferences attended must have a specialty crop sole focus.</u>** Example: conference subject matter **cannot** concur with other crops or livestock in addition to specialty crops. Individuals attending conferences need to be key to the project. Questions have been raised concerning the number and roles of personnel that are attending conferences.
- Travel costs and destinations are being heavily scrutinized by the peer review committee and need to be key to the completion of the outcome(s) identified in the proposal. Justification of why travel to specific destinations is deemed important to the project is highly recommended.
- Personnel costs are also being heavily scrutinized by the peer review committee. Please only apply personnel costs that are directly related to work connected to the project. The grant is not a replacement funding source for lost revenue streams to maintain personnel. The proposal must not supplant any program funding normally used to fund a project.

<u>The Project Profile Template includes the following:</u>

Project Title

The title must adequately describe the project in **15 words or less**.

Duration of Project

This section should state the project start date and project end date. The project may start no earlier than **October 1, 2021** and the project should conclude no later than **September 30, 2023.**

Project Partner and Summary

Include a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public.
A project summary provides a very brief (one sentence, if possible) description of your project.
A project summary includes:

1. The name of the applicant organization, that if awarded a grant, will establish an agreement with NDDA to lead and execute the project,
2. A concise outline of 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.

Project Purpose

This section must provide the following:
- Provide the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address
- Provide a listing of the objectives that the project hopes to achieve
- Project Beneficiaries
  - Estimate the number of project beneficiaries
- Check box if the project will directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers
  - 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.
- Check box if the project will directly benefit beginning farmers
  - Beginning Farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.
- Statement of solely 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 the Farm Bill. Further information regarding the definition of a specialty crop can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp.
- Continuation project information
  - If the project is a continuation of a project that the SCBGP funded previously:
    - Describe how the project differs from and builds on the previous project's efforts
  - Provide a summary (3 to 5 sentences) of the outcomes of the previous efforts
  - Provide lessons learned on potential project improvements
    - Describe what was previously learned from implementing the project, including potential improvements
    - Describe how the lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project will 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
- Other support from federal or state grant programs
  - The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Have you submitted the project to another federal or state grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is another federal or state grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?
    - If no, check box
    - If yes, check box and answer the following:
      - Identify the federal and/or state grant program(s)

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

External Project Support

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

Expected Measurable Outcomes

You must choose at least one of the eight outcomes listed 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.

Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (required for marketing and promotion projects)

Indicator: Sales increased from $_____ to $_____ and by _____ percent, as result of marketing and/or promotion activities.
➢ This requirement means that an established baseline of sales in dollars must 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.

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

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 though 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 the ecology 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 _____

FOR EXAMPLE:
Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a.
Of the 150 total number of children and youth reached, 132 will gain knowledge about eating more…

Data Collection to Report on Outcomes and Indicators

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome(s) and indicator(s) in the space below.

Budget Narrative

All expenses described in this Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP. If any matching funds will be used and a description of their use is required by the State department of agriculture, the expenses to be covered with matching funds must be described separately. Applicants should review the Request for Applications section 4.7 Funding Restrictions prior to developing their budget narrative.

Budget Summary	
Expense Category	**Funds Requested**
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal	
Indirect Costs	

Total Budget	

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 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 4.7.1 for further guidance.

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

Personnel Subtotal	

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			

Fringe Subtotal	

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*. See the Request for Applications section 4.7.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Travel, and Foreign Travel for further guidance.

#	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							

Travel Subtotal	

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 other 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 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 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.

NDDA will no longer allow the purchase of equipment. However, the rental of equipment is allowable.

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

Equipment Subtotal	

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 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

Supplies Subtotal	

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 a list of contractors/consultants, detailing out the name, hourly/flat rate, and overall cost of the services performed. 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			

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

Contractual/Consultant Subtotal	

Contractual Justification

Provide for each of your real or anticipated contractors listed above a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. 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, provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. See 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:

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 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

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

Other Subtotal	

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).

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

Program Income Total	

Indirect Charges

Indirect charges are not allowed.

d) SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

NDDA must receive the full application, including Application Cover Sheet, Project Profile Template, and Letters of Support (if applicable) **via one email no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on January 13, 2021**. The applicant will receive an email confirming receipt of the application. Any applications received after the due date will not be accepted.

Please see the anticipated timeline below for more information:

Applications due via email to NDDA ....**4:00 pm CST January 13, 2021**

Applications scored and ranked by review committee .....**March 2021**

Selected applicants notified by NDDA ....**May 2021**

State Plan submitted to USDA-AMS.................................**May 2021**

Project start date..**October 1, 2021**

Projects conclude no later than ....**September 30, 2023**

e) FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All SCBGP awards are subject to the terms and conditions, Office of Management and budget, Code of Federal Regulations, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, and other considerations described in the most recent SCBGP Terms and Conditions of Award.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project or program, service or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typical direct costs include, but are not limited to: compensation of employees who work directly on the award to include salaries and fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported project or program.

Indirect costs are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. **Indirect costs are not allowed**.

All costs must be allowable in accordance with the federal cost principles outlined in 2 CFR part 200 Subpart E. See below for examples of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Eligible Expenses - Allowable Costs

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in these sections is not intended to imply that it is unallowable. See Subpart E-Cost Principles of 2 CFR part 200 for further guidance on cost principles. Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Compensation for Personnel Services
  - Salaries, wages and fringe benefits
- Consultant Services or Subcontractors
  - Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill.
- Materials and Supplies
  - Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out the grant project. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits.
- Equipment and other Capital Expenditures
  - Lease/rental or depreciation costs
  - Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of $5,000 or more have the prior approval of USDA-AMS.
- Travel Costs
  - Expenses for airfare, lodging, meals, mileage, parking, etc. are allowable if directly related to, and necessary for grant activities, and accounted for in the budget. Note: in order to be reimbursed, travel costs must adhere to formal organizational policy or by

the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA if a formal policy does not exist for your organization.
- Other Miscellaneous Costs
    - For example: telephone, meetings, publications, etc.

Ineligible Expenses - Unallowable costs/expenses include:

Failure to mention a particular item of cost in this section is not intended to imply that it is allowable. Please see Subpart E-Cost Principles of 2 CFR part 200 for further guidance on cost principles.

- Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment, Buildings and Land (Equipment)
- Bad Debts
- Lobbying, Political and Other Governmental Activities
- Entertainment and Alcohol
    - Alcoholic beverages, except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of wine grapes and prior approval is given from the awarding agency.
    - Amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are not allowed.
- Other Ineligible Expenses
    - Indirect costs (administrative support) & applicant tuition
    - Contributions to a contingency reserve or any similar provision
    - Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the governmental unit to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations
    - Costs of goods or services for personal use of the governmental unit's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees
    - Organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used
    - Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments
    - Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the governmental unit, regardless of the recipient
    - Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of state funds in support of specialty crops grown in that state, rather than replace state funds

f) APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

NDDA will review grant applications to ensure the Project Profile Template meets the statutory purpose of the program, all application criteria are fulfilled, and that costs are allowable. Once applications are reviewed by NDDA, an external Peer Review Panel will complete an evaluation for each project. Below are the evaluation criteria:

	Max Points	Points Received
Project Purpose	**25**	
How well does the applicant define the specific issue, problem or need of the project? Are the project objectives clear and appropriate? Is the project important, timely, and feasible? If a continuation project, has the applicant defined how the project will differ from and build upon prior projects?	Comments:	
External Project Support	**15**	
Do specialty crop stakeholders, other than the applicant and those involved in the project, support this project and clearly state why?	Comments:	
Measurable Outcomes	**30**	
Does the project include at least one OMB approved outcome measure that directly supports the project's purpose? Does the outcome measure include at least one indicator and related quantifiable result? Does the applicant appropriately describe how the project will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator?	Comments:	
Budget Narrative	**20**	
Is the amount requested reasonable? Are line items reasonable and appropriate? Is each category justification completed and reasonable?	Comments:	
Overall	**10**	
Is the proposal complete, well thought out and written, and has demonstrated an appropriate amount of preliminary work to justify further research and development work on the project?	Comments:	
TOTAL	**100**	

g) REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applications will be reviewed by NDDA and external reviewers after the grant application submittal deadline. The external review committee may include growers, private industry members, universities, public agencies and representatives from non-profits with an interest and expertise in specialty crops, food marketing and agricultural systems. Applications are evaluated on the merits of the proposals based on the scoring criteria listed above. Applicants will be notified during the review process if monetary adjustments to grant requests, project proposal scope of work and/or project budgets are necessary.

h) ANTICIPATED AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing as to whether or not they received a grant award. NDDA anticipates that notifications will be made in May 2021 and grant awards will be made in October 2021.

5. Award Administration Information

a) AWARD NOTICES

All applicants will be notified in writing as to whether or not they are a successful project. Notifications will be mailed out in May 2021. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) for successful applications will be sent out in October 2021.

Prior to beginning work on the proposed project or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a NOGA with the NDDA indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks, report results, and authorizing NDDA to monitor the progress of the proposed project. A risk assessment will be completed by NDDA as a monitoring tool. Successful applicants will be obligated to attend a call that includes FY2021 Grant Award information. A completed Transparency Act Form with information relating to the project must also be completed and returned with the NOGA.

NOGA's must be signed and returned to NDDA within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the NOGA within the deadline may result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the applicant. Once the NOGA has been fully executed, applicants are able to work and expend funds on their project. **No work or expenditures are allowed before this date.**

b) PROGRAMMATIC, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

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-AMS 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 subrecipients are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

All applicants must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. DUNS number means the nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities. A DUNS number may be obtained or updated from D&B by telephone (currently 866-705-5711).

To receive an award, all applicants are required to register with the System for Award Management (SAM), and in doing so, to designate an e-Business Point of Contact. SAM registration must be updated annually and be active and maintained with current information at all times during an active award. Organizations that need to register in SAM for the first time or need to update their SAM registration can visit https://www.sam.gov/. Questions about SAM may be directed to askSAM@gsa.gov. All applicants must be in an eligible status on SAM before receiving funding.

To comply with the Federal Funding and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) and 2 CFR part 170, Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information, recipients must complete a Transparency Act Form to allow NDDA to report the required data on recipients.

General Compliance

All awarded grant projects must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award. Specific federal requirements may be found on the Office of Management & Budget website "Circulars" information area https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/circulars/. Each applicant is responsible for identifying and complying with all circulars relevant to the applicant's organization type.

Monitoring

NDDA reserves the ability to perform site monitoring visits to any and all applicants to ensure that work is progressing within the required timeframe and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information, as well as site visits.

Liability

NDDA will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal, nor for any work performed prior to the formal execution of the grant award.

Open Records

Proposals submitted for funding and all related grant awards and reports shall be subject to disclosure under the North Dakota open records law.

Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this RFA become the property of NDDA. NDDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

NDDA also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals or final reports to the NDDA website
- Reject any or all proposals received
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFA requirement and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of North Dakota
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants

- Require a good faith effort on part of the project sponsor to work with NDDA subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results
- Withhold any payments when grant award conditions are not met

Exclusions

Grant funds may not be used to fund political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).

c) REPORTING

The applicant will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with NDDA, receipts, invoices, and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. The applicant shall retain all data and other records relating to the acquisition and performance of the Grant Award Agreement for a period of three years after the final Federal Financial Report (SF-425) is received by USDA-AMS. This date will be communicated to each applicant once received. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the applicant shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records.

NDDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to NDDA will be a public record. All quarterly, annual, and final reports must be submitted using the required format.

Failure to meet reporting deadlines may result in special conditions being applied to the grant agreement. Special conditions may include site reviews, desk reviews, weekly/monthly conference calls, additional reporting, and returning of funds.

Biannual Reports

Biannual reports are required for projects and will summarize project activities and progress made. The biannual report is formatted the same as the annual report to make the annual report easier to compile. The biannual report will include the following information:
- Project Title
- Federal Project Expenditures to Date
- Activities Performed

Annual Reports

Annual reports are required for projects that span more than one year and will summarize project activities and progress made. These reports will go to the USDA-AMS. The annual report will include the following information:
- Project Title
- Federal Project Expenditures to Date
- Activities Performed

Final Reports

A final performance report will be required thirty (30) days after the end date of the grant agreement. The final report may be posted on the USDA-AMS and NDDA websites and is important for sharing project findings with federal and state agencies and the public. The final report will include the following:
- Project Title
- Project Impact and Findings
- Beneficiaries
- Activities Performed
- Outcome(s) and Indicator(s)/Sub-Indicator(s)
- Contact Person
- Federal Project Expenditures to Date
- Additional Information

In addition to the final project report, NDDA reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.

Reporting Compliance

Applicants who do not submit the biannual reports, annual reports, final report, or who submit incomplete reports may be required to return previously distributed funds to NDDA.

Reporting Timeline

Below is the timeline and due dates for biannual, annual, and final narrative reports:

Report	Reporting Period	Report Due on or Before
Biannual	October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022	April 30, 2022
Annual	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022	October 31, 2022
Biannual	October 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	April 30, 2023
Final	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2023	October 31, 2023

d) PAYMENT

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a quarterly basis. Each reimbursement request must include an itemized invoice and documentation of the work or expenses for which payment is requested. Itemization shall include the purpose, amount, and date incurred. Applicants must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e. include receipts, invoices, other source documentation) and clearly outline expenditures. Ten percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the complete final report including receipts for all expenditures.

Failure to meet reimbursement deadlines may result in special conditions being applied to the grant agreement.

Below is the reporting period and due date for the quarterly reimbursement request:

Quarterly Reimbursement Reporting Period	Reimbursement Due on or Before
October 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021	January 15, 2022
January 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022	April 15, 2022
April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022	July 15, 2022
July 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022	October 15, 2022
October 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022	January 15, 2023
January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023	April 15, 2023
April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023	July 15, 2023
July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023	October 15, 2023

Budget Adjustments

If a change in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request must be made to NDDA and approved prior to the reallocation of funds between budget categories. Budget changes should not be more than 10 percent cumulatively between all budget category changes throughout the life of the grant.

e) CONTACT
Potential applicants may request assistance using the information below:

North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Attention: Deanna Gierszewski
600 E Boulevard Ave Dept. 602
Bismarck ND 58505-0020
Phone: 701-328-2191
Applications must be emailed in appropriate format to: scbg@nd.gov

6. ALTERNATIVE GRANT PROGRAMS

Depending on the nature of the project, applicants may also wish to consider alternative programs such as the following:

Projects that support the increase of fruits and vegetables in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase and/or include technologies for benefit redemption systems should consider submitting those projects to the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grants Program at https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program

Projects that support domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or

store locally or regionally produced food products should consider submitting those projects to the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program at https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp

Projects that support bio based products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities (development of bio based products) should see the USDA-AMS energy website at https://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home

If you are looking to get money to start or expand a farm, the USDA-AMS has developed a web tool designed to connect burgeoning farm entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help get started: https://newfarmers.usda.gov/.