



2021 Illinois Specialty Crop Grant Program

Funded through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
(CFDA #: 10.170)

Proposal Requirements IDOA Review Committee Questions and Scoring Criteria

SCORE
(IDOA Review
Committee)

Applications will be scored based on their answers to the following questions.

100 points possible

Contained in
Submitted
Proposal Packet

All sections of the Project Profile outlined below must be completed. Incomplete proposals or proposals that do not follow the guidelines set forth in the Proposal Submission Guide will be rejected and not considered for funding.

Yes No

Project Application (Cover)	Required			The application (cover sheet), supplied by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, must be included with the project proposal as the first page of each submitted grant application packet.	
Project Title	Required			The title shall adequately describe the project in 15 words or less.	
Organization's Name	Required			The name of the applicant organization that will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the Illinois Department of Agriculture to lead and execute the project must be included.	
Project Summary	10 points			A project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public also is required. It should include the need for the project, a concise outline of its goals and a description of the general tasks to be completed to fulfill these goals.	0
Project Purpose	20 points	The following questions shall be addressed in this section:			0
				> What is the specific issue, problem or need that the project will address?	
				> Why is the project important and timely?	
				> What are the objectives of the project?	
				> If any of the project activities or costs has the potential to enhance the competitiveness of non-specialty crops, what are the methods or processes that will be implemented to verify all grant funds are expended on activities and costs that only enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops? If a cost-share or match has been proposed to cover non-specialty crop activities and costs, have the specific costs or contributions proposed to meet the cost-share or match been included? Has the source of those funds or contributions been identified and a description provided of how the appropriate amount of the cost-share or match was determined?	
				> If the project continues the efforts of a project that the program funded previously, does the proposal describe how this project will differ from and build on the previous project's efforts? Does it summarize (3 to 5 sentences) the outcome of the previous effort and explain how the lessons learned from that project will be incorporated into the new project to make it more effective? Does it also describe the likelihood of the project becoming self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on grant funds?	
		> Has the project been submitted to another federal or state grant program other than the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program for funding? Is a federal or state grant program other than the SCBGP currently funding the project?	Yes No		
				If no, indicate it has not.	
				If yes, has the other federal or state grant program been identified? Has the applicant described how the project differs from or supplements the efforts of the other grant program because the SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects?	
Project Beneficiaries	10 points	This section must indicate that the project benefits the specialty crop industry or general public rather than a single organization, institution or individual.			0
				> Who are the specialty crop beneficiaries of the project?	
				> How many specialty crop beneficiaries will the project benefit?	
				> How will the project benefit the specialty crop beneficiaries?	
				> What is the potential economic impact of the project, if it can be estimated?	
		> Does the project directly benefit either beginning or socially-disadvantaged farmers?			



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		The following questions shall be answered in this section.		
Expected Measurable Outcomes	15 points		<p>Has the project chosen, as required, 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?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 1: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (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 	0
			<p>Projects also must select at least one indicator listed in the SCBGP Performance Measures and provide the related, quantifiable result. Has an indicator been selected from beneath the appropriate outcome?</p> <p>For example: Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a. Of the 150 total number of children and youth reached, 132 will gain knowledge about eating more specialty crops.</p>	
			<p>If the outcomes and their listed indicators are not relevant to a particular project, has the applicant developed a project-specific outcome(s) and indicator(s) that will be subject to approval by USDA?</p>	
			<p>Does the project explain how it will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator?</p>	
External Support	10 points		<p>Provide the following information in this section:</p> <p>Does the project have the support of specialty crop stakeholders (other than the applicant and other organizations involved in the work)? If so, has the applicant adequately described why the project has their backing?</p>	0



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Budget Narrative

35 Points

0

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, the expenses to be covered with matching funds must be described separately.			
		➤	Personnel. Have the organization's employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops been listed? Have the activities of each employee been described, including approximately when those activities will occur?
		➤	Fringe Benefits. Are the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees that will be paid with SCBGP funds provided?
		➤	Travel. Has the applicant explained 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 .) Has the applicant explained how each trip will help achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project?
		➤	Equipment. Has a description been provided of any "special purpose equipment" to be purchased or rented under the grant? Has the applicant explained how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project? "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. The rental of "general purpose equipment" also must be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant.
		➤	Supplies. Does the proposal 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 solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops? Does it explain how the supplies are necessary to complete the project?
		➤	Contractual/Consultant. Contractual/consultant costs are 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. Has a list been provided of all the project's contractors and consultants that details their hourly or flat rates and the overall cost of the services they perform? If indirect costs will be included in the contract, please note that statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.
		u	Does the proposal describe the activities each contractor or consultant will accomplish to meet the goals and outcomes of the project? Has adequate justification been provided for why these services are to be used? Are timelines included for each activity?
		u	If a contractor or consultant already has been selected, has the applicant confirmed the same policies and procedures were followed that it uses for procurements from non-federal sources? If a contractor or consultant has not yet been selected, has the applicant pledged to follow those same requirements?
		u	If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee, has a justification been provided for the expenses? This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs or other expenses.
		➤	Other. Are expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories listed by cost per unit? Expenses in this section may include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs and data collection. If meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem are budgeted, has justification been provided to support that these costs are not entertainment costs? Does the proposal adequately describe why these expenses are necessary?
		➤	Indirect Costs. Do indirect costs exceed the limit of 8 percent of a project's budget? Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation and administrative expenses.
		➤	Program Income. If the project will generate program income, has it been declared? Program income is gross income 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); and registration fees for conferences.

TOTAL

0