

General Information

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is soliciting concept proposals for the 2021 USDA Specialty Block Grant cycle. Concept proposals should be designed to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops grown in Kentucky. Please consult the [USDA-AMS website for a list of crops that are eligible and ineligible](#) for this grant. **Please note that Hemp is not eligible for this grant.** Also, be aware that projects funded through this grant must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization and results must be easily replicable state wide. While Kentucky's funding for the 2021 grant cycle has not been announced all awards made under this program are contingent upon the availability of funding from USDA-AMS. Please see [USDA-AMS's website](#) for the official Notice of Funding Availability once it is posted.

Funding Opportunity Overview

State Funding Priorities

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has established funding priorities for the SCBGP which include:

- Project affects beginning, minority, or socially disadvantaged farmers
- Project affects certified organic agriculture
- Project affects supply chain and logistics support for small and medium scale producers

Federal Funding Priorities

USDA-AMS encourages states to develop projects which benefit the specialty crop industry in one or more of the following ways:

- Enhance food safety
- Improve the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act ([21 U.S.C. Chapter 27](#)), for example, developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors
- Invest in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes
- Develop new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Enhance pest and plant disease control
- Increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops
- Improve efficiency and reduce costs of distribution systems
- Enhance sustainability

Examples of Acceptable Projects:

- A state requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a specific 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 program 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 university or academic institution request grants to study ways to fight disease or insect pressure specific to climates in Kentucky.

- A university or academic institution request grants to study supply systems and specialty crop marketability in Kentucky

Examples of Unacceptable Projects:

- A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business or organization.
- A state requests grant funds to make grants to individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual businesses.
- 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 his logo in order to make 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 its membership.

Solicitation Process and Timeline

Phase 1

Concept Proposal

During the first phase of the solicitation process all applicants must fill out the concept proposal package found here. Once completed it will be reviewed by an advisory committee and any questions or clarifications will be sent back to applicants that are invited to submit an official grant application. The advisory committee is comprised of stakeholders in Kentucky's specialty crop community.

Phase 2

Grant Proposal

Successful concept proposal applicants will be invited to submit a full grant proposal. Applicants will then complete and present their grant proposal to the advisory committee and answer any questions the committee may have. Final grant funding decisions will then be made and grant recipients will be notified.

Key Dates

January 11, 2021 – Concept proposal due
Mid-January – First advisory meeting
March 15 – Full Grant proposal due
Mid-March Second advisory meeting