



**DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE**

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

# **SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

## **Request for Applications – Fiscal Year 2024**

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds to enhance the competitiveness of Connecticut specialty crops including fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, herbs and spices, medicinal plants, honey, hops, maple syrup, mushrooms, nursery crops (including Christmas trees), and floriculture. Projects funded through this grant program must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization.

## **KEY DATES**

**APPLICATION OPENS: JANUARY 19, 2024**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 4, 2024**

## **PROGRAM DETAILS**

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/Publications/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant>

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **PROGRAM QUESTIONS**

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## **SUBMISSION**

Applications for this program are accepted through Cognito Forms.

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/CTDoAg/2024CTSpecialtyCropBlockGrantProgramApplication>

### **SUBMISSION POLICY**

It is the applicant's responsibility to follow all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this request for applications (RFA). The Connecticut Department of Agriculture will accept the last validated submission through Cognito Forms prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of application.

We cannot accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline. Cognito Forms will prevent applications from being submitted after the posted deadline.

### **SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION**

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email.

# SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

## QUICK FACTS

### Program Purpose

The purpose of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops by–

- leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
- assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
- expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and
- addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

Specialty crops are fruits; vegetables; tree nuts; honey; hops; maple syrup; mushrooms; culinary herbs and spices; medicinal plants; nursery crops (including Christmas trees); and floriculture.

Visit [What is a Specialty Crop?](#) for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible commodities.

### Eligibility

Any entity within the State of Connecticut may apply, but projects must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization. Applicants must describe how their project will benefit and produce measurable outcomes for specialty crop industries rather than a single business, organization, or individual.

### Available Funds

CT DoAg has not yet received confirmation from the USDA on the 2024 allocation to the State of Connecticut. Based on previous years, it is anticipated between \$250,000 and \$400,000 will be available to award.

### Project Length

Projects can be funded for up to 33 months (2 years, 9 months).

### Funding Source

Connecticut SCBGP awards are funded through the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service.

### Funding Opportunity Description

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) awards Specialty Crop Block Grants to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. In Connecticut, the Department of

Agriculture (CT DoAg) administers these funds to enhance the competitiveness of Connecticut specialty crops by:

1. leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
2. assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
3. expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and
4. addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

The Connecticut SCBGP aims to support all sectors of Connecticut’s specialty crop industries and improve the performance of Connecticut specialty crops within local, domestic, and international markets. Applications must describe **projects that are supported by and address the needs of Connecticut specialty crop producers**. We encourage projects that will grow Connecticut’s economy and sustain farmers’ livelihoods.

Visit [www.ams.usda.gov/scbpgp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbpgp) for more details on the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

## State Funding Priorities

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture, in partnership with statewide specialty crop stakeholders, identified the following program funding priorities for 2024 through an online feedback form. Funding priorities below are *not* ranked.

### FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Research, development, and dissemination of innovative production practices to enhance farm viability, natural resource conservation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Market access (local, regional, national, or international), marketing, branding, and consumer education
- Producer collaboration—including establishing or strengthening producer associations and cooperatives
- Value chain enhancement—including strengthening relationships between producers, aggregators, processors, distributors, retail businesses, and consumers
- Pest and disease management
- Technical assistance to address efficiency, conservation, climate change, business viability, workforce development, labor issues, succession planning, and challenges facing beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers
- Enhancing food safety and improving the capacity of specialty crop businesses to comply with Food Safety Modernization Act or food safety audit program requirements

In addition, three new priority areas have been added for 2024:

- Programs for training, mentoring, apprenticeships, farmer circles, specialty crop conferences/stipends to support specialty crop farmers who identify as black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).
- Projects and programs which support agricultural career development for specialty crop farmers who identify as BIPOC
- Training programs for individuals who identify as BIPOC that are aspiring to become agriculture service providers but require additional training and exposure to agriculture

CT DoAg strongly encourages **innovative projects** to develop new knowledge that can strengthen specialty crop businesses.

Note the following USDA definitions for Historically Underserved Producers:

- A **Beginning Farmer** is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.
- An **Underserved Farmer** is a farmer who is a member of an Underserved Group. An Underserved 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.
- A **Veteran Farmer** is a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof, who was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and has not operated a farm or has operated a farm for no more than 10 years or who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

## How To Apply

Applicants must submit a completed application **by March 4, 2024 at 4:00 PM** using [Cognito Forms](#). More information is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/Publications/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant>.

## Recorded Informational Session for Applicants

- A recording will be made available for all interested applicants to receive an introduction to the Connecticut SCBGP and the 2024 application projects.
- The webinar will be available at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/Publications/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant>.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible Applicants

Any Connecticut based entity may apply if the proposed project benefits Connecticut's specialty crop industries and aligns with program requirements, including funding restrictions. Applicants must describe how the project will benefit and produce measurable outcomes for specialty crop industries and/or the public rather than a single specialty crop business, organization, or individual. We will not fund projects that primarily benefit a single business or that business's product, organization, or individual. Single businesses, organizations, or individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

We encourage individual businesses, organizations, or individuals to collaborate with other industry representatives, such as members of producer associations, to ensure that the project will benefit multiple businesses and address specialty crop industry needs. A list of producer associations and their contact information is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Marketing/Marketing/Our-Partners>.

## 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 (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end—they have a limited duration. One way to think about this is that a project has an overarching goal that is accomplished through a series of individual activities or tasks. Examples of projects could include **researching new cultivars, providing outreach opportunities on specialty crops to youth, families, seniors and the overall community, or marketing apples through a targeted promotional campaign.**

Activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects might include hiring personnel, purchasing special equipment, holding an educational workshop, planting specialty crops, or distributing product promotional materials.

## Eligible Projects

1. Projects must be supported by and address the needs of Connecticut specialty crop producers.
2. SCBGP funds must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in domestic or foreign markets. Visit [What is a Specialty Crop?](#) for a list of eligible commodities.
3. Applicants must identify at least one **outcome measure** (see Appendix B) that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.
4. We will not award funds to an entity to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services.
5. Projects where one organization specifically attempts to disparage the mission, goals, and/or actions of another organization are unallowable.
6. Projects that have not received SCBGP funding in the past are preferred, but applications that build on previously funded SCBGP projects remain eligible. In this case, the applicant must describe how the project will differ from and build on previous efforts.
7. Applicants who have demonstrated incomplete or unsatisfactory performance with prior CT DoAg grants may be ruled ineligible for participation at the sole discretion of CT DoAg.

## Benefit to More Than One Product or Organization

Applications for grant funds must describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for Connecticut specialty crop industries and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. We will not award grant funds for projects that primarily benefit a single business or that business's product, organization, or individual. In addition, grantees cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. The following are examples of eligible and ineligible projects:

#### EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE PROJECTS

- A non-profit organization requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
- A single farmer implements food safety practices or models on his/her property to meet food safety requirements and conducts a field day and training services to encourage other small family farmers to adopt the methods.

#### EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE PROJECTS

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

### Outcome Measures

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP on a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. In an effort to fulfill this requirement, AMS collaborated with stakeholders, including the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to develop a listing of measurable outcomes and indicators that quantifiably measure performance toward fulfilling the program’s purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including OMB, U.S. Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

Each project **must** include at least one of the seven outcomes listed in **Appendix B: Outcome Measures and Indicators** and at least one of the indicators listed under the selected outcome(s). Progress toward outcomes and indicators selected will be reported in annual and final performance reports.

### Application Review & Award Information

Connecticut SCBGP funds will be awarded to projects that benefit specialty crop industries through a competitive review process. A committee will review all applications and make recommendations to CT DoAg. CT DoAg will make final recommendations to USDA-AMS on all awards.

Multi-year projects are encouraged, and grants may be awarded for projects up to two (2) years, nine (9) months in length. The maximum fund request is capped at \$100,000.

### Deadlines

All applications must be submitted by **March 4, 2024, at 4:00 PM.**

### Key Dates (subject to change)

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<b>JANUARY 19, 2024</b>	Applications open for submission
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<b>FEBRUARY 15, 2024</b>	Recorded Informational Video Available View at <a href="http://www.ctgrown.gov/grants">www.ctgrown.gov/grants</a>
<b>MARCH 4, 2024</b>	Deadline to submit application
<b>APRIL 8, 2024</b>	Applicants notified of funding decisions
<b>MAY 2024</b>	Connecticut Department of Agriculture submits State Plan to USDA-AMS
<b>AUGUST 2024</b>	Grantees notified of AMS decisions. Adjustments may be required.
<b>OCTOBER 1, 2024</b>	USDA announces final awards

## **Projects More Relevant for Other Federal Grant Programs**

Entities that engage in projects that support the increased consumption 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 Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program.

Entities that engage in projects that support domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, and 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 Promotion Program and Local Food Promotion Program.

Entities that engage in projects that support biobased products and bioenergy and energy programs, including biofuels and other alternative uses for agricultural and forestry commodities (development of biobased products), should see the USDA energy website at <http://www.usda.gov/energy/matrix/home> for information on how to submit those projects for consideration to the energy programs supported by USDA.

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

### APPLICANT & PROGRAM INFORMATION

#### Primary Applicant

Be prepared to enter the following:

- Applicant Name
- Business or Organization
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)\*
- Mailing & Physical Address
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Applicant Type (Nonprofit; Producer; Producer association or cooperative; State agency or department; University extension; etc.)

You will be asked to self-certify that you are in compliance with state regulations and in good standing with the State of Connecticut. A screenshot of applicant registration with the CT Secretary of State must also be provided. Information can be looked up here:

[https://service.ct.gov/business/s/onlinebusinesssearch?language=en\\_US](https://service.ct.gov/business/s/onlinebusinesssearch?language=en_US)

\*All entities doing business with the federal government use the Unique Entity ID (UEI) created in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). If your business or organization does not yet have a UEI, enter 000000000000 in this field. You must create an account in the [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and receive a UEI to be eligible.

#### Program Information

Answer the following questions as it pertains to the project for which you're applying.

- Will your project benefit Underserved Farmers?
- Will your project benefit Beginning Farmers?

A Beginning Farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

If the project directly benefits underserved or beginning farmers in any way, select "yes." Be aware that USDA receives requests for projects that benefit underserved or beginning farmers and provide project abstracts to the public to explain how each project benefits these groups.

### PROJECT TITLE & DURATION

*Character counts indicated below include spaces.*

#### Project Title

Provide a descriptive title in 15 words or fewer. *Maximum 200 characters.*

## **Provide the estimated start and end dates for your project.**

The default start date is 1/1/2025. Enter an end date no later than 9/30/2027.

## **PROJECT PROFILE**

The project profile should detail the information necessary to describe how you will fulfill the goals and objectives of your project. A fillable PDF of the template is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/Publications/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant>. **You must upload your proposal to Cognito Forms using this template. Download Adobe Reader (free version) to use the template.**

[Access the Project Profile Template here.](#)

## **PROJECT BUDGET**

### **Budget Details**

In addition to the budget and justification information submitted in the Project Profile, please also upload the budget form in Cognito Forms.

[Access the Budget Form here.](#)

For each budget category included, list the amount requested for each year and the total request for each category. If there are no expenses for a particular category, please note with a N/A.

Consult **Appendix A: Allowable and Unallowable Costs & Activities** if you have questions about whether costs can be funded by the Connecticut SCBGP.

## **WORK PLAN**

Explain the activities that will be performed to accomplish the goals of the project and the budget necessary to complete the project activity.

[Access the Work Plan template here.](#) This must be uploaded to Cognito Forms with your submission.

For each activity:

- Indicate what the activity is (including any travel)
- Who will do the work of each activity (including sub-recipients/contractors)
- When it will be done, including month and year, within the allowable grant period
- The expenses associated with the project activities

Be sure to include the activities related to monitoring your plan and information dissemination.

## SECTION 3: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

### Grant Agreement & Payment

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing CT DoAg to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Connecticut as well as program-specific requirements.

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee must submit:

1. **Contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**
2. **A current IRS Form W-9** (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months;
3. **Vendor Form**
4. **Attend grant contract workshop**

Awardees will be required to do the following upon agreement execution:

- a) Provide quarterly reimbursement invoices
- b) Submit a quarterly Reimbursement Request Form
- c) Submit one or two annual reports
- d) Submit one final report
- e) Conduct at least one social media post for each year the project is active
- f) Present to at least one grower meeting on the project results

### Fund Disbursement

Funds shall be reimbursed on a quarterly basis. Prior to release of funds, awardees must submit a Reimbursement Request Form and invoice to justify the use of funds.

Reimbursement shall be withheld until all necessary annual and final reports are received. Additional details are provided in the signed agreement.

### Report and Monitoring Requirements

Potential applicants are hereby notified that all successful grantees will be required to submit up to two annual report(s) and one final report. Additional details, including specific report information and submission deadlines, will be included in the signed agreement.

Grantees are subject to program monitoring, including but not limited to, site visits, phone calls, and emails to check on the status of project(s) at any time for the duration of the award.

## APPENDIX A

### ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

<b>Advisory Councils</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.
<b>Alcoholic Beverages</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for alcoholic beverages unless the cost is associated with fulfilling the purpose of the grant program and either approved in the application or with prior written approval.
<b>Building and Land - Construction</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees). This also includes construction and construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for rental costs of land and building space. However, lease to own agreements (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) are not allowable. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>A <i>building</i> is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of people, animals, or property and having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.</p>
<b>Conferences</b>	<p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of conferences. A conference is defined as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, workshop or event whose primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the Federal award. Allowable conference costs paid by the recipient or subrecipient as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals (see <a href="#">Meals</a> for restrictions), and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the recipient or subrecipient must report fees as program income (See <a href="#">Program Income</a>).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> to rent a building or room for training; however, where appropriate, AMS encourages the use of technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room. The recipient should use the most cost-effective facilities, such as State government conference rooms, if renting a building or a room is necessary.</p>
<b>Contingency Provisions</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for miscellaneous and similar rainy-day funds for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening. Unallowable for working capital for activities/items not already in place.
<b>Contractual/Consultant Costs (Professional Services)</b>	<p><i>Allowable subject to limitations below.</i> Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the recipient in the form of a procurement relationship.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for contractor/consultant employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (refer to: <a href="http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2015/general-schedule/">http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2015/general-schedule/</a>). This does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. If rates exceed this amount, the recipient is required to justify the allowability of the cost aligning with 2 CFR §§ 200.317-326.</p>

<b>Contributions and Donations</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the recipient to other entities. A non-Federal entity using grant funds to purchase food or services to donate to other entities and/or individuals is unallowable.
<b>Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Machines</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for the purchase/lease of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT equipment.
<b>Entertainment</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for entertainment costs include amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as bands, orchestras, dance groups, tickets to shows, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities). Entertainment costs are defined in 2 CFR § 200.438.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> where the specific cost is considered to meet the requirements of the sponsored program and are authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>
<b>Equipment</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment or lease agreements to own (i.e., least-to-own or rent-to-own).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for rental costs of general purpose equipment when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval. Vehicles may be leased but not purchased. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>For vehicle and equipment leases or rentals with an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000, rates should be in light of factors such as: rental costs of comparable vehicles and equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the vehicle or equipment leased.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criteria is met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement;</li> <li>2) Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible;</li> <li>3) The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization;</li> <li>4) Acquired in accordance with organizational practices;</li> <li>5) Must only be used to solely meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement;</li> <li>6) More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment;</li> <li>7) Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and</li> <li>8) Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable.</li> </ol> <p><b>Definitions</b></p> <p><i>Equipment</i> is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.</p> <p><i>Acquisition cost</i> means the cost of the asset including the cost to prepare the asset for its intended use. Acquisition cost for equipment includes the net invoice price of the equipment, including the any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for its acquired purpose.</p> <p><i>General Purpose Equipment</i> means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.</p> <p><i>Special Purpose Equipment</i> is equipment used only for research, scientific, or technical activities.</p>

<p><b>Equipment – Information Technology System</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for information technology systems having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established in accordance by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) by the recipient for financial statement purposes or \$5,000. Acquisition costs for software includes those development costs capitalized in accordance with GAAP.</p> <p>Information technology systems include computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources. Computing devices means machines used to acquire, store, analyze, process, and publish data and other information electronically, including accessories (or “peripherals”) for printing, transmitting and receiving, or storing electronic information. Examples of unallowable information technology systems include service contracts, operating systems, printers, and computers that have an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for website development, mobile apps, etc., that are not considered to be information technology systems, but rather social media applications.</p>
<p><b>Farm, Gardening, Production Activities and Supplies</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for farm, gardening, and production activities, materials, supplies, and other related costs including but not limited to soil, seeds, shovels, gardening tools, greenhouses, and hoop houses.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> where the specific cost is considered to meet the requirements of the sponsored program and are authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>
<p><b>Fines, Penalties, Damages and Other Settlements</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with, Federal, state, tribal, local or foreign laws and regulations.</p>
<p><b>Fixed Amount Subawards</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for cost related to fixed amount subawards.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> to meet the requirements of the sponsored program (noncompetitive) and with prior written approval. A pass-through entity may provide subawards based on fixed amounts up to the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, provided that the subawards meet the requirements for fixed amount awards in 2 CFR § 200.201</p>
<p><b>Fundraising and Investment Management Costs</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for 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. This includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital.</p>
<p><b>General Costs of Government</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Salaries and expenses of the Office of the Governor of a State or the chief executive of a local government or the chief executive of an Indian tribe;</li> <li>2) Salaries and other expenses of a State legislature, tribal council, or similar local governmental body, such as a county supervisor, city council, school board, etc., whether incurred for purposes of legislation or executive direction;</li> <li>3) Costs of the judicial branch of a government;</li> <li>4) Costs of prosecutorial activities unless treated as a direct cost to a specific program if authorized by statute or regulation (however, this does not preclude the allowability of other legal activities of the Attorney General as described in § 200.435 Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringements); and</li> <li>5) Costs of other general types of government services normally provided to the general public, such as fire and police, unless provided for as a direct cost under a program statute or regulation.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Goods or Services for Personal Use</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of goods or services for personal use of the recipient’s employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.</p>
<p><b>Indirect Costs – Unrecovered</b></p>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for unrecovered indirect costs.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for projects with match requirements to use unrecovered indirect costs as part of cost-sharing or matching.</p>
<p><b>Insurance and</b></p>	<p><i>Allowable</i> when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval as indirect costs</p>

<b>Indemnification</b>	for insurance and indemnification.
<b>Lobbying</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> as defined in 2 CFR § 200.450.
<b>Meals</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for breakfasts for conference attendees because it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for meal costs that are duplicated in meeting participant's per diem or subsistence allowances.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for lunch or dinner meals if the costs are reasonable and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for meals consumed while in official travel status. They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established written travel policies.</p>
<b>Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of membership in any civic or community organization.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs of membership in business, technical, and professional organizations when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>
<b>Organization Costs</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> with prior approval for organization costs per 2 CFR § 200.455.</p>
<b>Participant Support Costs</b>	<i>Allowable</i> when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for such items as stipends or subsistence allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, surveys, and focus groups.
<b>Political Activities</b>	<i>Unallowable</i> for development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).
<b>Pre-Award Costs</b>	<p><i>Allowable</i> when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval if such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the project's scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award.</p> <p>A recipient may incur pre-award costs 90 calendar days before the award. Expenses more than 90 calendar days pre-award require prior approval. These costs and associated activities must be included in the recipient's project narrative and budget justification. All costs incurred before the award are at the potential recipient's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of an award imposes no obligation on AMS to award funds for such costs.</p>
<b>Printing and Publications</b>	<i>Allowable</i> to pay the cost of preparing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and publications relating to the project; however, the printing of hard copies is discouraged given the prevalence of electronic/virtual publication means.
<b>Rearrangement and Reconversion Costs</b>	<p><i>Allowable</i> as indirect costs with prior approval for cost incurred for ordinary and normal rearrangement and alteration of facilities.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> as direct costs with prior approval for special arrangements and alterations costs incurred specifically for the award. Rearrangement and reconversion costs are those incurred in restoring or rehabilitating the non-Federal entity's facilities to approximately the same condition existing immediately before the start of the grant agreement, less costs related to normal wear and tear.</p>
<b>Salaries and Wages</b>	<i>Allowable</i> as part of employee compensation for personnel services in proportion to the amount of time or effort an employee devotes to the grant-supported project or program during the period of performance under the Federal award, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Such costs must be incurred under formally established policies of organization, be consistently applied, be reasonable for the services rendered, and be supported with adequate documentation.



	<p>Salary and wage amounts charged to grant-supported projects or programs for personal services must be based on an adequate payroll distribution system that documents such distribution in accordance with generally accepted practices of like organizations. Standards for payroll distribution systems are contained in the applicable cost principles (other than those for for-profit organizations).</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> for salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for project staff who devote time and effort to activities that do not meet the legislated purpose of the grant program.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of an Organization’s Image, Logo, or Brand Name</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, a general logo, or a general brand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotional items could say “Buy STATE/COUNTY Grown Apples” but not “XYZ Grown”, which promotes XYZ generically.</li> <li>• A promotional campaign to increase producer sales of “STATE/COUNTY Grown fruits and vegetables” is acceptable while increasing membership in “STATE/COUNTY Grown” generally is not.</li> </ul>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotion of Venues that do not Align with Grant Program Purpose</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs for promotion of specific venues, tradeshow, events, meetings, programs, conventions, symposia, seminars, etc. that do not align with the legislated purpose of the grant program.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Promotional Items, Gifts, Prizes, etc.</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for promotional items, swag, gifts, prizes, memorabilia, and souvenirs.</p> <p><i>Allowable with conditions</i> to meet the requirements of the sponsored agreement, in the approved application or with prior approval for marketing activities directly related to the funded project. Promotional items include point-of-sale materials, promotional kits, signs or streamers, automobile stickers, table tents, and place mats, or promotional items of a personal nature (e.g., t-shirt, hats, etc.).</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs of the value of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts (e.g., the \$5.00 value for a \$5.00 clip-out coupon).</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (e.g., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) as long as they benefit more than a single program or organization.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Food for Displays, Tastings, Cooking Demonstrations</b>	<p><i>Allowable</i> for food for displays, tastings, and cooking demonstrations.</p> <p><i>Unallowable</i> where the specific cost is considered to meet the programmatic purpose of the sponsored program and is authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – General Marketing Costs</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand.</p> <p><i>Allowable</i> for costs designed to promote products that align with the purpose of the grant program.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Sponsorships</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with sponsorships. A sponsorship is a form of advertising in which an organization uses grant funds to have its name and/or logo associated with certain events and where the organization does not necessarily know how the funds associated with sponsorship costs will be used. These costs also benefit only the organization offering funding, limiting the beneficiaries to the sponsor organization.</p>
<b>Selling and Marketing Costs – Use of Meeting Rooms, Space, Exhibits that do not Align with Grant Program Purpose</b>	<p><i>Unallowable</i> for costs associated with trade show attendance/displays, meeting room reservations, and/or any other displays, demonstrations, exhibits, or rental of space where activities do not specifically align with the purpose of the grant program. See Conferences for more information.</p>
<b>Supplies and Materials,</b>	<p><i>Allowable</i> for costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a</p>

<p><b>Including Costs of Computing Devices</b></p>	<p>Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies must be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs. Only materials and supplies used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs.</p> <p>A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. In the specific case of computing devices, charging as direct cost is allowable for devices that are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated, to the performance of a Federal award. Where Federally donated or furnished materials are used in performing the Federal award, such materials will be used without charge.</p>
<p><b>Training</b></p>	<p><i>Allowable</i> when the training is required to meet the objectives of the project or program, including training that is related to Federal grants management.</p>
<p><b>Travel – Domestic and Foreign</b></p>	<p><i>Allowable</i> for travel, when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval when costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy and the purpose aligns with the legislated purpose of the program.</p> <p>The allowable travel cost of recipients that do not have formal travel policies and for-profit entities may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by General Services Administration (GSA), including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. If a recipient does not have a formal travel policy, those regulations will be used to determine the amount that may be charged for travel costs.</p>

## APPENDIX B

### OUTCOME MEASURES AND INDICATORS

USDA AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP at a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting consistent performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

Each project submitted in the State Plan must include one or more of the seven outcomes listed below, and one or more of the indicators listed underneath the selected outcome. If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, select one or more.

If the indicator(s) below the selected outcome(s) are not relevant to a project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed which will be subject to approval by AMS.

The progress of each indicator must be reported in the Annual Performance Report and the result in the Final Performance Report.

At the conclusion of the grant agreement, AMS will aggregate the data collected to assess the overall impact of the program and report to OMB and Congress on these national outcome measures. AMS will review the quality of the information received in subsequent performance reports and modify the outcomes and indicators as needed over time to lead to better results in showing the impact of the SCBGP.

The following performance measures go into effect beginning with the FY 2022 grant application cycle and reflect direct stakeholder feedback and provide a framework that allows grant recipients to evaluate project activities more accurately in relation to each program's statutory purpose.

#### **Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops**

- 1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.1a Adults \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.1b Children \_\_\_\_.
- 1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.2a Adults \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.2b Children \_\_\_\_.
- 1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted \_\_\_\_.
- 1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed \_\_\_\_.
- 1.5 Increased sales measured in:
  - 1.5a Dollars \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.5b Percent change \_\_\_\_.
  - 1.5c Combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities \_\_\_\_.

#### **Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution**

- 2.1 Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring,

and/or accessing specialty crops \_\_\_\_.

2.2 Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops \_\_\_\_.

2.3 Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or expanded \_\_\_\_.

2.3a Number of new online portals created to sell specialty crops \_\_\_\_.

2.3b Number with expanded seasonal availability \_\_\_\_.

2.3c Number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings \_\_\_\_.

2.3d Number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings \_\_\_\_.

2.4 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems \_\_\_\_.

2.5 Number of stakeholders that adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems \_\_\_\_.

2.6 Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems \_\_\_\_.

2.6a Number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.) \_\_\_\_.

2.6b Number of partnerships with underserved organizations \_\_\_\_.

2.7 Total number of new/improved distribution systems developed \_\_\_\_.

2.7a Stemmed from new partnerships \_\_\_\_.

2.7b Increased efficiency \_\_\_\_.

2.7c reduced costs \_\_\_\_.

2.7d Increased specialty crop grower participation \_\_\_\_.

2.7e Expanded customer reach \_\_\_\_.

2.7f Increased online presence \_\_\_\_.

2.8 Number of specialty crop-related jobs:

2.8a Created \_\_\_\_.

2.8b Maintained \_\_\_\_.

2.9 Total number of new individuals who went into specialty crop production as a result of marketing \_\_\_\_.

Of those, the number who are:

2.9a Beginning farmers or ranchers \_\_\_\_.

2.9b Underserved farmers or ranchers \_\_\_\_.

2.10 Number of market access points that reported increased:

2.10a Revenue \_\_\_\_.

2.10b Sales \_\_\_\_.

2.10c Cost-savings \_\_\_\_.

### **Outcome 3: Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes**

3.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) \_\_\_\_.

3.2 Number of stakeholders that:

3.2a Established a food safety plan \_\_\_\_.

3.2b Revised or updated their food safety plan \_\_\_\_.

3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new/improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP) \_\_\_\_.

3.4 Number of prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to

mitigate food safety risks \_\_\_\_.

3.5 Number of stakeholders that used grant funds to:

3.5a Purchase \_\_\_\_.

3.5b Upgrade food safety equipment \_\_\_\_.

#### **Outcome 4: Improve Pest and Disease Control Processes**

4.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases \_\_\_\_.

4.2 Number of stakeholders that adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations \_\_\_\_.

4.3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases \_\_\_\_.

4.3a the number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management \_\_\_\_.

4.4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases \_\_\_\_.

4.5 Total number of producers/processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices \_\_\_\_.

4.5a Reduction in product lost to pest and diseases \_\_\_\_.

4.5b Improved crop quality \_\_\_\_.

4.5c Reduction in labor costs \_\_\_\_.

4.5d Reduction in pesticide use \_\_\_\_.

4.6 Number of producers/processors improving the efficiency of pest and disease control diagnostics and response testing, as reported by:

4.6a Improving speed \_\_\_\_.

4.6b Improving reliability \_\_\_\_.

4.6c Expanding capability \_\_\_\_.

4.6d Increasing testing (i.e. survey work for pests) \_\_\_\_.

#### **Outcome 5: Develop New Seed Varieties and Specialty Crops**

5.1 Number of cultivar and/or variety trials conducted \_\_\_\_.

5.1a The number that advanced to further stages of development \_\_\_\_.

5.2 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties developed \_\_\_\_.

5.3 Number of cultivars and/or seed varieties released \_\_\_\_.

5.4 Number of growers adopting new cultivars and/or varieties \_\_\_\_.

5.5 Number of acres planted with new cultivars and/or varieties \_\_\_\_.

#### **Outcome 6: Expand Specialty Crop Research and Development**

6.1 Number of research goals accomplished \_\_\_\_.

6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:

6.2a Yielded findings that supported continued research \_\_\_\_.

6.2b Yielded findings that led to completion of study \_\_\_\_.

6.2c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process or technology \_\_\_\_.

6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results \_\_\_\_.

6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals \_\_\_\_.

For each published research output, the:

6.4a Number of views/reads of published research/data \_\_\_\_.

6.4b Number of citations counted \_\_\_\_.

#### **Outcome 7: Improve Environmental Sustainability of Specialty Crops**

- 7.1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies \_\_\_\_.
- 7.2 Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies \_\_\_\_.
- 7.3 Number of producers that adopted environmental best practices or tools \_\_\_\_.
- 7.4 Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/ conservation or other environmental outcomes \_\_\_\_.
- 7.5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies that focused on:
- 7.5a Water quality/ conservation \_\_\_\_.
  - 7.5b Soil health \_\_\_\_.
  - 7.5c Biodiversity \_\_\_\_.
  - 7.5d Reduction in energy use \_\_\_\_.
  - 7.5e Other positive environmental outcomes (optional) \_\_\_\_.
- 7.6 Number of additional acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators/specialty crops \_\_\_\_.